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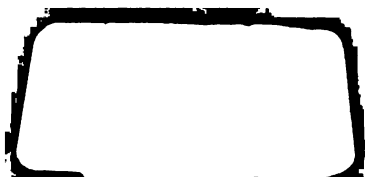
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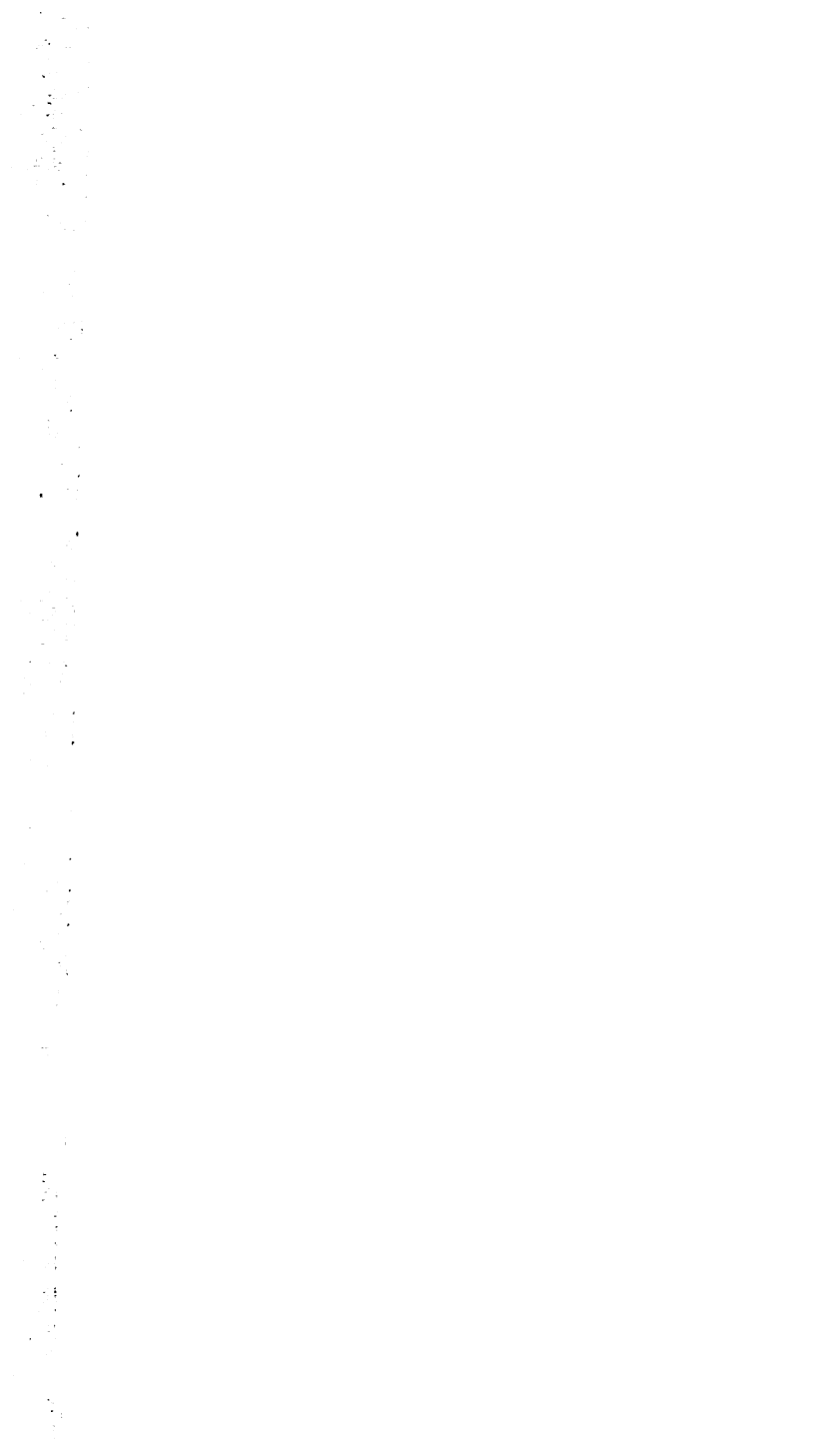
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Joseph Johnson

SKETCHES
OF
ENGLISH CHARACTER.
—
VOL. I.

SKETCHES
OF
ENGLISH CHARACTER.

BY MRS. GORE,

AUTHORESS OF

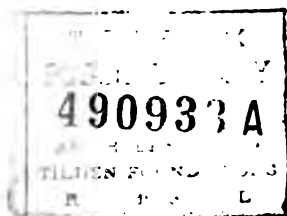
"MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS," "THE DOWAGER,"
"PEERS AND PARVENUS," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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SKETCHES
OF
ENGLISH CHARACTER.

INTRODUCTION.

To pretend to characterize the classes or professions of a nation so late in the day as the middle of the nineteenth century, is a somewhat arduous task. In England, as elsewhere, every die is worn down,—every angle rounded,—every feature effaced,—every salient point smoothed, pummiced, and polished into the most level monotony of surface; a surface from which neither dramatist nor novelist can extract either plot or character, without violating in the grossest manner the probabilities of civilized life.

Singing is now far from the only feat

that is accomplished "by the million." People eat, drink, sleep, talk, move, think in millions. No one *dares* to be himself. From Dan to Beersheba, not an original left! All the books published seem to have been copied from the same type, with one of Wedgewood's manifold-writers. All the speeches made might be stereotyped in January by an able reporter, to last out till June. In society, men are packed one within the other, like forks or spoons in a plate chest, each of the same exact pattern and amount of pennyweights. Doctor, divine, or devil's-dragoman, (*Ang.* lawyer,) all dressed alike,—all affecting the same tastes, pursuits, and habits of life.

Would Shakspeare have invented Falstaff, or Parolles, in such an order of society? Would Scott have hit upon the Baron of Bradwardine, or Lawyer Pleydell? Would even Fielding or Smollett have extracted the ripe humour of their inventions out of such a sea of batter? The few authors of fiction who pretend to individualize, are obliged to have recourse to the most unsophisticated class for elements of

character ; society of a higher grade being so used down into tameness, as to form one long, long Baker Street, or Guildford Street, of mean, graceless, and tedious uniformity—from number one to number one hundred, a hundred times ditto repeated.

It is not so in other capitals. Elsewhere, every profession has its stamp, and every grade its distinctions. In Paris, or Berlin, or Vienna, you can no more surmise when you dine out what will be placed on the table, or what conversation will take place around it, than you can pre-assure the morrow's weather. In London, whether the dinner occur at the house of a man of eight hundred a year, or of eight thousand, you are cognizant, to a dish and a topic, what will be supplied for the delectation of your ears and palate. You eat the turbot and saddle of mutton by anticipation, as you go along ; and may chew the cud of the great letters of the ministerial and opposition papers, which anon you will have to swallow, diluted with milk-and water by the dull, or vivified by a few drops of alcohol by the brilliant.

In the evening entertainments, as at the dinners, "*toujours perdrix*!"—Jullien, Gunter, and Lord Flipflap,—Lord Flipflap, Gunter and Jullien!—You see the same people waltzing, fiddling, and serving the refreshments, and hear the same phrases exchanged among them, at every fête given at the west end of the town between May and August. May and August?—Rather say from A.D. 1835 to A.D. 1850!

This tedious uniformity of conventional life, which has converted society into a paper of pins with people stuck in rows, instead of minikins, is, we are told, the result of a high state of civilization. The moment the English left off clipping their yew-trees and laying down their gravel walks at right angles, they transferred the system to society. "Ye fallen avenues!" (so pathetically sung by Cowper,) you have *now* your parallels at every dinner party; and not a coterie in Grosvenor Square but presents the stiff unmeaning rectangularity of Hampton Court Gardens.

This eternal sameness of manners and opinions is, in fact, so notorious among

ourselves, that no one ventures to say, "It is a fine day," till he have ascertained whether such be the opinion of Lord Rigmorole or Mr. Tompkins,—whosoever may be the Pope, or fogleman, or model man of his set. And yet England still retains on the continent the distinction of being "*le pays des originaux*;" and one of the first ejaculations of a foreigner to an English person with whom he is on confidential terms, is, "admit that you are the oddest people in the world!"

Useless were it to assert that, on the contrary, we are the evenest,—smooth as glass,—level as wood pavement; for, sooth to say, half the traits of English eccentricity cited by foreign journals are strictly true. Not a city on the continent but has witnessed some marvellous trait of English originality, some feat performed as for a wager;—for the moment an Englishman feels the pragmatality of his native land too much for his spirits, off he goes, to relieve himself abroad; and, like a high-pressure boiler, of which the safety-valve has been obstructed, the explosion is terrible.

A man of peculiar habits, who has vainly tried to drill his whims and oddities to the regimental discipline of London life, and fire his opinions in platoons with the commonplace people of his parish, the moment he finds himself out of bounds of conventional tyranny, is sure to run into extremes. The English, consequently, pass for cracked on the continent of Europe, just as the Russians pass for *millionnaires* ; merely because the wealthy of Russia and eccentric of Great Britain are forced to travel in search of enjoyment.

Were they to stay at home, an inquest *de lunatico inquirendo* would soon settle the matter ! The moment a presumptuous individual acts or thinks an inch out of the plumb-line of perpendicularity exacted by the formalities of society, his next of kin steps in to prove that he ate, drank, or slept at the hours that suited him, not at those which suited the rest of the world ;—perhaps that he had an attachment to a particular coat, and wore it though threadbare, having new ones in his wardrobe ;—or perhaps that he chose to have too many new

ones in his wardrobe, though he had a good one to his back. Any twelve respectable steady-going jurymen, accustomed, like footmen, to their two suits a-year, and to eat, drink, and sleep by clockwork, will not hesitate to return him *non compos* ; till the unhappy wretch is eventually driven into idiotcy by the imputed loss of reason.

An instance occurred a short time since of an individual, deprived of liberty and the control of his property by the decree of such a jury, and the evidence of the usual number of old women, who, being rational enough to give the slip to his incarcerators, figured with distinction at a foreign court, and obtained the verdict of the highest members of the French faculty that he not only possessed the use of his senses, but that his senses were of a highly intelligent order.

Had he lived in King Charles's days, or even in the days of the royal nieces of Charles, he would have been laughed at as an odd fellow, and perhaps hitched into a lampoon ; or, fifty years later, mimicked in one of the farces of Foote. For, after all, what was he but one of the marked features

of a varied surface of society? And when the cases of half the unfortunate persons we dismiss, as incompetent of mind, to a residence at Chiswick, Hanwell, or Hoxton, come to be investigated, it usually turns out that they are no odder than people who were called humourists in the days of Goldsmith, and characters in those of Fielding.

The great origin of this peremptory uniformity is the influence of our habits of business. To facilitate despatch, everything the least out of the common way must be avoided, and all obstacles in the railroad of life removed. People have no time to lose in wonder. They like to find in the man with whom they have to deal, a fac-simile of themselves; so that they can meet him, point to point, without demur or examination. As society is at present constituted, they know to an item with what and whom they have to deal in a stockbroker, banker, physician or barrister. They could draw his portrait, or make a model of him, without ever having set eyes upon his face. Such people are made

to pattern ; and the type of each is as familiar to every mother's son of us, as though specifically sold at a turner's, like a bat and ball.

The classification of society has certainly effected a sort of overland-mailish facility of intercommunication between remote points of society. Lord Chancellors have become unmysterious as haberdashers ; and my Lord Duke, no longer arrayed in his star, garter, and unapproachability, can be trafficked with in the sale of a hunter or a living, with as much ease as formerly his agent. The days of chain-mail and farthingales are gone by !—It is all Doudney,—all “ rich gros de Naples at 1s. 11½d. a yard !”

Epochs usually obtain a name in history, as the “ age of gold,” “ the age of iron,” “ the age of the Crusades,” “ the age of Shakspeare ;”—and Byron, in a fit of bitterness, characterized *our* century as “ the age of bronze.” The truth, and consequently the treason, would be far greater, were it defined as “ the age of non-entityism !” Examine it in all its phases. Go to

church, to the play, into the courts of law, nay, to court itself, and you will be forced to confess an utter want of individuality; and the Roman Emperor who wished that mankind had a single neck that he might make an end of it at a blow, should come back and see how vast a step we have achieved towards the accomplishment of his desire. To modify a phrase of Wordsworth, there are not "forty" but four millions "feeding like one!"

The oceanic platitude of such an order of existence is bad enough in itself; but even the least inquiring spectator cannot help exclaiming: What *next*? What became of Rome when it had drivelled into inanity? What became of France after the collapse into which it subsided after the over-excitement of the days of Louis le Grand? What shall we turn out after we have ceased to be a *bête monstre*? Shall we be parcelled out again, like the overgrown empire of Alexander? Or shall we rise up armed men, after being sown in the earth as the worn-out stumps of a dead dragon? Or are we fated to an

eternal calm of corruption, like that described in the Ancient Mariner, when

Slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea ?

After figuring as the infinitely little, are we become the infinitely *less*,—the *animalculæ* of modern civilization ?

Time was, that comets were esteemed prodigies, and produced a national panic the moment their tails whisked into sight. But now that their movements are as well understood and correctly chronicled as those of the sober-sided fixed stars always winking in their proper places, people are delighted to be broken in upon by visitations which lend bloom to their roses and flavour to their vintage. Thanks to Van Amburgh and Carter, even lions and hyænas are tamed. Self-playing organs grind the oratorios of Handel into insignificance ; and the Transfiguration of Raphael has lost its charm in the pale and worn-out lithographs which multiply and enfeeble its mysteries. The Seven wonders of the world are in ruins ; and the only

wonder left is that we cannot find out the secret of inventing an eighth.

Our ancestors ran to look at an aloe in bloom, believing that it flowered but once in a hundred years. *We* know better; but the aloe has lost its charm. Our ancestors revered the oaks that extended their gigantic arms beside their dwelling, certifying its antiquity far better than the genealogical tree in their hall. *We* bring ancient trees in Pickford's vans to our lawns, and make them overshadow our upstart villas; but the oak has lost its charm. Our ancestors thought a shilling well spent for admittance to see the skeleton of a cameleopard. *We* have giraffes giraffing unnoticed in the Regent's Park; and keep a serpentry for improving the domestic breed of rattlesnakes and boa-constrictors. But if Mungo Park or Waterton were to write their Travels now, they would have lost their charm. The sting is taken out of everything: the flavour everywhere extracted!

Even the most high Court of Parliament mumbles where it used to bite. Its thun-

derbolts have fizzed into squibs : its storms are rattled with a sheet of iron and a quart of peas. People care no more about appearing at the bar of the Reformed House than at the bar of the Eagle Tavern. The terrors of the place have vanished. The Sultan, so terrible as the "turbaned Turk," is scarcely worth mentioning in a Fez !

Many persons still extant, must remember the villanous old coinage of George III.; the tin-like sixpences which added a word to the slang dictionary, and the button-like shillings, of which the image and superscription might have been Cæsar's, or the Elector of Hanover's, for anything that the most scrutinising turnpikeman could decide to the contrary!—Just such flat and featureless dumps are we becoming. Nothing short of ringing on the counter can determine whether we be of the right metal.

It was held a national blessing when the Regent favoured us with a new coinage. For the first week or so, people scarcely liked to spend their half-crowns and shil-

lings, so gloriously did they resemble medals. The inscriptions had to be read, —the reverses to be studied. The unthrifty, who had flung about pursefuls of those bits of tin, began to hoard the new issue of the mint, as having more significance.

So will it be when the present generation gives place to a sharper die. The first man who dares to think and speak for himself, and think and speak strongly, will become as Gulliver in Lilliput. The prodigious flock of sheep into which it has pleased our nation to subside, will follow at his piping. Let him ply his galvanic battery with address, and the corpse of our defunct literature will revive ; making, perhaps, like other galvanized corpses, a few grimaces in the onset.

Meanwhile a few sketches of men and women as they are, and were, in England, have been attempted in the following pages : —dissolving views of society, —too slight, let us hope, to provoke much severity of criticism.

POPULAR PEOPLE.

“THE success of certain works may be traced to sympathy between the author’s mediocrity of ideas, and mediocrity of ideas on the part of the public!” observes a shrewd writer—evidently not a popular one, or he would entertain higher respect for the tribunal of public taste. It is certain, however, that, whether as regards books or men, there exists an excellence too excellent for general favour.

To make a hit, to captivate the public eye, ear, or understanding, without a certain degree of merit, is impossible. But it is not merit of the highest order that makes the hardest hit. Merit of the highest order must ever be “caviar to the general.” The *chefs-d’œuvre* of art and literature are often

condemned to years of obscurity ; while some vulgar ballad seized upon by the barrel-organs, is made to persecute us in every street. Some coarse actor having convulsed the public with laughter by his buffooneries, the new farce becomes the darling of the public ; and some familiar incident, from being daubed by the illustrative brush of a jocosé artist, is lithographed into fame, and hung in all the inn parlours of the kingdom.

So it is with human beings. Certain people as well as certain pieces obtain possession of the stage. Favoured guests as well as favoured pictures are to be found in every parlour. Talkers as well as tunes, may haunt one like a hand-organ in all directions ; people whom every body likes,—whom every body invites,—and concerning whom every body, when asked the motive of their liking, is sure to answer, “I like them because every body likes them ; —I like them because they are so popular.”

The newspapers confer this arbitrary epithet upon their favourites as a species

of diploma ; " Mr. A., the popular poet," " Mr. B., the popular preacher," Mr. C., the popular member," " Mr. D., the popular actor," and so on through the alphabet. The greatest poets, preachers, and senators, have however been the least popular.

Society is apt to confer the honours of popularity upon lords and ladies, squires and squires, with partiality equally indiscriminating. Society dotes upon people who are neither so wise, so clever, so good, nor so great, as to afford too high a standard of wisdom or virtue, and consequently a tacit reproach to its own deficiencies. " Too good by half," " too clever by half," is a frequent phrase among those who are sneakingly conscious of being silly or worthless. They admit with a plausible air, that Mr. A.'s poetry, Mr. B.'s prose, or Mr. C.'s speeches, may be very fine for anything they know. But *they* do not pretend to understand them. With the same fatal smile of virtuous stupidity, they declare that, " A. is a superior man, certainly, but nobody can bear him,—B. an accom-

plished woman, but singularly unpopular. While all the world admits the merits of the charming Mr. C. and Mrs. D.;—Mr. C. being so great an enlivenment to a dinner-party, and Mrs. D. a host in herself at Christmas in a country-house.” Mr. C. and Mrs. D., are of course marked out for Popular People.

It is easy to understand how books may be puffed or nostrums advertised into popularity. Names that meet us in placards on every wall, or morning and evening in the columns of every newspaper, become, whether we will or no, engraven on our memory. We have all heard or read of Mallan’s teeth, Solomon’s spectacles, Mechi’s razor-strops, or Stocken’s envelopes. We have seen them praised till we begin to have some faith in their virtues. We cannot believe that so much printer’s ink and advertisement duty would be expended for nothing. But it is much more difficult to comprehend how “the world’s large tongue” can be bribed to wag in favour of such very small deer as the Mr. Cs and Mrs. Ds. “A sop to Cerberus,” is the

ordinary way of stopping the bark and bite of the infernal monster. But that "many-headed monster thing," the public, is a Cerberus requiring such a perpetual supply of sops, that the effort seems supernatural.

The truth is that popularity resembles certain echoes which, once evoked, repeat themselves *ad infinitum*. If any one can be found to utter the phrase or praise loud enough in the first instance, it proceeds in the sequel to repeat itself, after the fashion of the courtiers in Count Hamilton's charming story of "Fleur d'Epine."

We are wrong, perhaps, to say "any one;" for the privilege of bestowing popularity is specific with certain persons. Let the dullest book ever written be praised in a certain review—it will sell; let the dullest dog that ever prosed be proclaimed, an able man by a certain coterie,—he will become a popular talker. We have more than one charming Countess who has only to pronounce a man a *bel esprit*, to stamp his popularity at all the dinners of the season; we have more than one *valseur* at

Almack's, who has only to dance twice with the same *débutante*, to render her the most popular partner in the ball-rooms of May Fair.

In such trivial distinctions as these, indeed, it is not surprising that the world should be credulous. But in matters that concern its welfare,—its existence here and hereafter,—its mortal body,—its immortal soul!—To let the pretty prattlers or elephantine prozers of society, create the popular physician,—the popular preacher!

The namby-pamby of the popular poet may be laid on the shelf. But through the blunders of the popular physician *we* may come to be laid out,—or laid in the grave; while the errors of the popular preacher may induce a still more alarming consummation. Through the combined agency of both, we may, as Don Juan says,—but what Don Juan says is not always fit to be repeated.

“*Do* send for Dr. Creaksley, my dear,” cries the Dowager Lady Gunderton, one of the most accredited popularity-mongers of

modern society. "Creaksley is the only man going,—Creaksley is the person who performed such a miracle for Lord Growley's child, by saving its life after it had been immersed five minutes in a cauldron of boiling water. He had it kept in a bath of iced camphorated oil a day and a night. Ah! Creaksley is a wonderful man. He has three pair of carriage-horses always on the trot, and never takes his own horses off the stones. During the season there are always posters waiting for Creaksley at Hyde-park-corner, to take him to the fashionable villas. One can't get him without three days' notice. Since the days of the famous Dr. Radcliffe, never was physician so popular!"

And why?—What is the origin of this wondrous popularity which keeps coach-horses on the trot, and dowagers on the gabble?—Is it skill, learning, knowledge, tact, experience? By no means!—Creaksley is a man of trivial mind, and equable temperament; patient with his patients, hospitable with his acquaintances;—who, if he let people die, never kills them by the

rashness of his experiments ;—and when he allows them to live, does not render life a bore. Creaksley talks agreeably, because wise enough to talk of anything but physic ; which he would probably throw to the dogs, if he thought the dogs foolish enough to take it. Far easier to administer it at a guinea a dose to such ninnies as the Dowager Lady Gunderton, seeing that the Dowager Lady Gunderton is able to promote his apotheosis as a popular physician.

Then there is Sir Gordon Mosley ! With what party does one ever dine throughout the London season without meeting Sir Gordon Mosley ?—Sir Gordon Mosley is as inevitable as the tongue and chickens,—or the turbot and lobster sauce. Sir Gordon Mosley and his white cravat are essential portions of every well-mounted dinner-table. People expect to meet him with as dead a certainty as sherry or champagne.

Read the dinner lists of the Morning Post ; one could almost fancy there were half-a-dozen Sir Gordon Mosleys, so infal-

libly is he comprised in each one of them. "The Marquis of H. entertained a distinguished party at dinner on Monday last, including the Prince of Rigmaroli Fuggi, the Earl and Countess of Mungewell, Sir Gordon Mosley, and other distinguished guests."—"The Chancellor of the Exchequer entertained at dinner, on Tuesday last, the Master of the Rolls, Viscount and Viscountess Trimmer, Lord Hobbledehoy, Lord Grig, Sir Gordon Mosley, and a large and distinguished circle."—We find Sir Gordon Mosley in the *Court Circular* :—we find him in the company of Lord Chancellor, archbishops, judges, princes, peers, academicians, presidents of all sorts of colleges, authors, and ministers of state.—Sir Gordon Mosley is ubiquitous—Sir Gordon Mosley is universal.

Sometimes on arriving late for a dinner-party, you look round the circle assembled in the drawing-room, miss him, and congratulate yourself that for once you have escaped. Don't flatter yourself!—Five minutes before the announcement of dinner you will find that he has glided in, and

is whispering behind the chair of your hostess. Sir Gordon Mosley knows the habits of every dining-house in town, and can calculate to a turn the arrival of the guests, and roasting of the venison. He is not only there, but there to a minute.

Strangers are naturally anxious to ascertain the peculiar merit of this integral fraction of the eating world. At table, they lend an attentive ear to his conversation,—in the drawing-room they fix an observant eye on his deportment. “Where be his quips, his quirks, his flashes of merri-ment?”—or if not his wit, where is his wisdom,—where his information?

Worthy public! Sir Gordon Mosley is a moral non-entity; a man who knows nothing, save where he is to dine to-morrow, and next day, and every day of the week. He has a good countenance, wears a good coat, bears a good name, makes a good bow, is civil and conciliating, of a medium tint that harmonises with everybody; one in short, who, without one faculty or quality of real distinction, retains a high place in the category of Popular People.

Mr. Meggot is a gentleman equally important in the estimation of the coteries : —not as a diner out—for his name is less grandiloquent in the announcement of the butler, or lists of the Morning Post; but for the *soirée* or squeeze. Meggot is a something in his way. He sat through two Sessions in parliament, where he said nothing; and was Secretary of Legation at some foreign Court, where he *did* nothing. But he is a man ever to be seen at the elbow of ministers, or button-held by the leading men of the day. The cabinet sets a high value on him. The doctrinarians (for England has its sect of doctrinarians as well as France), look up to him with respect. Meggot's name is cited as an endorsement to an opinion, like Rothschild's to a loan; and when Meggot is stated not to be much shocked at any occurrence, the world decides that it cannot be very dreadful.

This, at least, *must* be a superior man. This authority, to which sages and statesmen bow, must be a true oracle. An oracle?—Meggot is a man who, in the

whole course of his existence, never uttered an opinion!—Meggot is an echo,—an embodied affirmative,—the best listener in the world. He is one of those who submit to be told the things he knows, by people who know nothing about the matter. He is ready to swallow the most monstrous assertions. He seems convinced by the most preposterous arguments. His air of candour is worth a million. When we reflect upon the craving appetite of human vanity, it is not wonderful that such a man should command the affections of society, and stand pre-eminent in the ranks of Popular People.

Sporus enjoys a less gratuitous species of popularity;—Sporus is a popular author. His works flash upon one like Lucifer matches, and go off like detonating guns. No sooner in print, than out of print. The reviews revere him,—the daily papers delight in him,—the magazines make much of him. Nothing like Sporus!—Such style—such delicacy—such freedom from affectation! The *petite maitresse* buys him and binds him up in morocco; the school-

mistress buys him and binds him up in calf; the bookseller buys him and binds him up in a penalty to complete a new book at a month's warning. Great guns are discharged from the battery of the press on the production of every new work, as on the birth of the sons of the Sultan. He is written up, till one fears that the sky must be raised a story to make way for his renown. The most crabbed of critics grows mild in treating of him; and the reading world, like Monsieur Laffarge, is poisoned in doses of sugar and water.

And who or what is this successor of Scott and Byron? This Hallam, this Rogers, this Moore?—Alas! Sporus is but a shadow of his namesake of the days of Pope:—

A mere white-curd of ass's milk;

or rather, the mere mouldy sponge of a leaden inkstand.

But Sporus excites no jealousies—Sporus eclipses no humiliated rival. Sporus is one of whom literary men say with a smile among themselves, "Poor Sporus! he is a

∴ painstaking writer, and really an excellent fellow. Let us do him a good turn."

Puffed, therefore, and praised on all sides, his writings first attract notice, and finally command attention. The public is convinced that *all* the weekly, monthly, and three-monthly critics cannot be in the wrong. The public asks for his picture,—the public demands his bust. The public will one day ask a pension for him from Government ; and eventually, perhaps, from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, a corner in Westminster Abbey. Is not *this* placing poor, harmless Sporus in the catalogue of Popular People ?

Concerning the popularity of the num-skulls who give feasts that wise men may eat them, no one need to express surprise. The popularity of proprietors of hospitable country-houses, is equally comprehensible ; so is the popularity of East-India Directors.

Long live all those who've anything to give,

is the cry of many besides the luckless poet in whose mouth it was wickedly placed by James and Horace Smith.

But Lady Creepmouse has nothing to give, not even a dinner!—Lady Creepmouse has no country-house; Lady Creepmouse has a wretched house in town. She is not handsome—she is not young—she is not rich—she is not clever.—Yet no one even names her, except as that charming Lady Creepmouse!

Would you know the origin of this extraordinary popularity? It is because—but no! On this one occasion, let us be discreet; on this one occasion, let us be merciful. We have no quarrel with Lady Creepmouse. Let her sun herself while she can in the smiles of the world; enjoying to their utmost limit the pleasures and immunities accorded to Popular People.

THE GOSSIP.

WHY are the English—the grave English—the intellectual English—the moral English—the greatest gossips in the world? No one conversant with the social life of other nations, will deny the fact ;—but who will adduce the cause? Doctor Johnson defines to gossip “ to chat, to spend time idly.” A more correct definition of the word, as used in modern parlance, would be, “ to spend time idly in chatting of other peoples’ affairs.”

Yet the English are not a people addicted to spending time idly. It must be some overmastering influence that inspires them with the vague curiosity leading to so vile a waste of the impalpable treasure more precious than silver or gold.

Is it that the desire of knowledge, so ex-

tensively cultivated among us by the high-pressure power of modern education, begets in weak minds, incapable of retaining solid information, a restless craving after intelligence? Does learning, like the wind which extinguishes a candle while it stimulates a great fire, strengthen the strong mind, but enfeeble the weak? No matter!—By some defect of organization, the English, taken as a mass, are decided gossips. Is it not written in the book of the chronicles of their public journals—those bulletins of the national mind? Is it not attested by the avidity with which the most trivial anecdotes of domestic life are circulated and eagerly swallowed, by that yawning gulf, the reading public? Is it not pointed out with a sneer by the foreign world,—rejoicing to detect in our details of private parties and descriptions of court-trains and feathers, a counterbalance to the sageness of our councils, and vastness of our scientific achievements?

The scandal of personality is put down in continental countries by the strong arm of the law; but the froth of every-day “fashionable intelligence,” is simply blown

aside by the contemptuous lips of common sense !

But it is the appetite for gossip, and not the food which the yearnings of that appetite bring into the market, with which we have to deal. The press gossips for society, because society gossips for itself and makes no secret of its love of gossiping, on pretence that a mere tattler is a merely harmless person. But the taste thus established, is any thing but harmless. Like the bindweed, which, when suffered to take root, extinguishes the growth of more profitable plants, it intertwines itself irretrievably with all the produce of the soil.

Critics boast of a new work as “ a pleasant gossiping book ; ”—people boast of a new acquaintance, as “ a pleasant gossiping fellow ; ” and the most valuable of our periodicals was a few years ago redeemed from decadence by a series of “ pleasant gossiping articles.” Without pretending to excessive wisdom or exorbitant morality, without being arrayed

in a gown and band,

Just to entitle one to make a fuss,

it may fairly be asserted that this fashion of

erecting into a virtue that which is a mere weakness, is unworthy the pastors and masters of the public mind. The sketcher of modern character, is an especial sufferer from the evil. To avoid the vagueness of describing, like Theophrastus, "The absent man," "The miser," he assigns, after the example of La Bruyère, imaginary names to his creations. A Dr. Creaksley or Sir Gordon Mosley, appears more likely to grapple with the fancy of the reader than "The fashionable physician" or "The diner out." Forthwith, the gossips begin to bristle their manes and lash their tails. From house to house runs the confidential whisper of "Have you seen the sketch of A.?" "What think you of the portrait of B.?" "Creaksley, you know, is A.; and Sporus (how shameful!) is B!"—

Yet Creaksley, courteous reader, is as much A., or Sporus B., as Danneker's Ariadne is a personal portrait of Bacchus's "loved and left of old;" or as Guido's Aurora may be called a picture of the rosy morn. Types of a class, it affords evidence of their accuracy that originals are so readily supplied

and strenuously pointed out for these airy outlines. But it also affords proof of the truth of what we have already advanced,—that England, and more especially London, is an abominable gossip!—

When a new work of fiction issues from the press, in a style called by the French *un roman de mœurs*, by ourselves, a fashionable novel, be sure that it is either personal, or will pretend to be personal, or will be said to be personal. Without some such *nota bene* to the Gossips, the piquancy of its general hits at the foibles of society would be thrown away. At this very moment, half our readers are running on impatiently through our page, hoping that some especial Gossip, male or female, will be pointed out to shame, and some entertaining anecdote cited, in order to fasten the label round the right neck! “Have at ye all, my gossips!”—Not *one* of you, ladies, but is the original of the horrible Lady Pagginton we are about to describe; not *one* of you, gentlemen, but has your sympathetic part in “that amusing, gossiping fellow,” Flutter, of whom more anon.

You are all gossips! You gossip every where, of every thing;—not alone of the dinner-party and ball-room,—the pink satin dress and flirtation in the balcony;—but after visiting a condemned cell, you gossip concerning the morose anguish of the being you have beheld contemplating the terrors of eternity!—You obtain an order for Bethlem Hospital: and, unawed by the spectacle of one of the overmastering scourges of the human race, garnish your discourse at the gay dinner-table with pleasant anecdotes of the comicalities of madmen!—You hie to the factory, and after shuddering at the blue faces and pinched noses of the suffering population, return home and gossip pleasantly at the *conversazione* concerning the curious dialect of the overseer, or the quaint comments of some droll little victim promoted to the honours of interrogation.

An infirm nobleman is murdered at dead of night in his chamber. With what hosts of entertaining anecdotes and clever puns do the gossips recount the narrative of his assassination!—A woman elopes from her

husband, leaving her infants motherless ; what joy for the gossips in all the concomitant details of the wig and broken spectacles of the paramour ! On such occasions, regardless of the influence of such histories on their own minds and the minds of their hearers, the gossips overrun both town and country, scattering the seeds of their tares in all directions.

The most awful catastrophes — suicide, battle, murder, sudden death — become reduced to the same trifling consistency—the same chaff—after being ground in the mill and winnowed through the sieve of a gossip.

Be patient, gentle reader : we promised you “ a light gossiping article.” You shall come to Lady Pagginton and Felix Flutter in time. Allow us, however, to begin with the gossip of an humbler sphere.

There is Miss Bargeham, the favourite milliner of the well-known market-place of B. (“ B ?—B. certainly stands for Birmingham !” murmurs some gossiping reader). For the last thirty years, the counters of Kitty Bargeham have obtained a remark-

able preference over a succession of new comers in the immediate neighbourhood. Vainly have the windows of her rivals displayed the most unquestionable superiority of cap and turban, hat and bonnet, plaid ribbons and Chantilly veils. These parti-coloured attractions have invariably given place within the year to a placard of "TO LET, UNFURNISHED;" or, "TO BE SOLD UNDER PRIME COST, BY ORDER OF THE ASSIGNEES." One rash firm even went as far as to advertise the attraction of a Parisian assistant. "A young lady from the eminent French house of Mesdames Follette et Cie., Rue Vivienne."—In vain!—In six months, the shop was shut up and the Parisian assistant shut out. There was no standing against the "light gossiping articles" of Kitty Bargeham.

Oh! that back-parlour!—Oh! the inedited anecdotes of Brush Park and Lark Hall, conveyed from their respective ladies'-maids, to the ears of the milliner, and from the milliner to the ears of all the tradesmen's wives and farmers' daughters of the neighbourhood of B.! The shoe-ribbon

purchased of Mesdames Brown, or the green veil of Mrs. Smith, might be of worthier texture, or even by sixpence a better bargain. But what was that compared with the joy of having been seated face to face with Kitty Bargeham, in her little stuffy, dingy sanctum, listening to charming inuendos about Sir Thomas Lark's London losses at play; or hints that "something would be sure to come of Miss Melusinda Brush's early walks in the green lane." Kitty "knew it from the best authority,"—but Kitty "would say no more!"

More reputations were "done to death by slanderous tongues" in Kitty Bargeham's back-parlour, than in the whole county besides;—a perpetual twitter of chit-chat being emitted on every opening of its sacred door, to tantalize the less privileged customers not yet initiated into the gossip-shop. But Brush Park is now to be let, and Lark Hall to be sold; too hot to hold the respective proprietors, martyred *à coup d'épingles* by the milliner of the market-place.

Lady Pagginton—(draw your chair closer to the fender, courteous gossip,—we have got to Lady Pagginton at last!—) is a widow, and a London lady,—that is, a Marylebonian, the most diluted and colourless species of the London lady. Mediocrity personified, whether as regards mind, body, or estate, Lady P. has managed to make herself heard of as the gnats do—by humming and stinging. The creature means no harm—'tis in its nature. But the sting is not the less irritating, nor the noise less tiresome. So is it with Lady P. Her perseverance in making her way into your house, her perseverance in communicating in emphatic whispers idle sayings concerning still idler doings in which you have not the slightest interest, her perseverance in attributing to her last auditor the comments with which she has herself embroidered the intelligence derived from her first informant, are worthy a better cause. You might cut a canal with almost half the labour.

Nothing too great, nothing too little, to be caught up and carried off in her ladyship's budget. To the little matters, like

the bits of worthless glass which acquire beauty in a kaleidoscope, she imparts importance by a species of scientific illusion ; while the great ones she brings within her paltry compass, as the body of De Rancé's mistress was forced into the leaden coffin, by cutting off the head. She contrives to gossip about the affairs of the East, by garnishing them with secret anecdotes of our lady of Cairo, the renowned widow of Mehemet Ali's eldest son ; or sets her mark upon the politicians of the West, by rumours pilfered from the Charivari, about the domestic life of a minister, whose whole life is public ; or the secret cabinet of Metternich, through whose keyhole not even the winds of heaven are permitted to whistle.

But without this mischievous occupation, this perpetual cobbling of colloquial shreds and patches, what would become of the vapid, unmeaning, unconnected Lady P. ? Devote her leisure to some useful purpose ?— Condescend to knit—sew—read ? Why, she would sink into a second-rate person of respectability ; losing all pretext for intrud-

ing upon your more serious occupations, in her capacity of "a most lively, agreeable woman, knowing everybody, full of anecdote; in short, the very perfection of A GOSSIP!"

Felix Flutter is a more dangerous individual. *His* story and note savour of the rattlesnake rather than the gnat; *his* smatterings consist of steel-filings rather than of chaff; *his* pourings forth are *aqua Tofana*, rather than milk-and-water; but all dispensed under the same delusive head, of "light, pleasant gossip!"

Men might be brought to the scaffold, or condemned to the cart, for the crimes, "pleasant but wrong," imputed in the light anecdotes which Flutter impels like shuttlecocks from his smart racket, from house to house. Like the snake-charmers of the East, who amuse your leisure with the display of reptiles, that seem to curl and play in their adroit hands, he ties love-knots with adders! Worse still, when, like the cunning seers of Egypt, who, by pretended incantations, seem to withdraw from beneath the very cushions of your divan, the

serpent they have cunningly introduced into the chamber to accredit their power, Felix Flutter contrives to inspire your mind with terror and mistrust, by ascribing to the treachery of a bosom friend, the mischief concocted by his own malice !

But Flutter is such an amusing fellow ! Nothing like him for a morning visit—a dull dinner-party ! Like Mr. Merryman, at Gyngell's, his pockets are always full of squibs and crackers, to be discharged at intervals, when the wit of the company runs low.

And then he is so plausible ! His most improper little stories make their appearance in the most decent attire : like one of Congreve's gallants, arrayed in the gown and cassock of Dr. Spintext ; or Cartouche, dressed up as one of the Maréchaussée, to rob a house. Nothing more decorous—nothing more deadly. He runs you through the body with a regulation small-sword ; or if you insist on committing suicide, sells you your arsenic, with “poison” labelled on the packet, as per order of the Magistrates' Bench.

My public! know ye not this Felix Flutter?—Has he not related, *sub rosa*, of each of you to the other, that your grandfathers were one shocking thing, and your grandmothers the other shocking thing?—That you have overdrawn your banker—that you have injured your early friends—that you have blasphemed the church—or conspired against the state?—Know ye not Felix Flutter?—Know ye not *ten* Felix Flutters—*twenty* Felix Flutters?—Know ye not, in short, in some shape or other, the concentrated essence of A MODERN GOSSIP?

SUSCEPTIBLE PEOPLE.

THE incomparable Charles Lamb used to fancy he could detect a schoolmaster by his grammatical scrupulosities in the use of the subjunctive mood. But for the fear of the said schoolmaster before our eyes, we should have headed this article, "Touchy People," according to the popular phrase. Pedantically speaking, the word should be "Tetchy;" and so, to steer clear between plain English and pure English, we have taken leave to Anglicise the French designation of those self-tormentors, who are ever suspecting or resenting affronts; thin-skinned martyrs, "tremblingly alive all o'er" to ideal injuries, or wincing, like other galled jades, under imaginary lashes.

A sketch of these gratuitous martyrs forms a natural appendage to the gossip;

since to their mutual reaction, the weakness of the one and the power of the other is chiefly attributable. The mischief-making of the gossip renders silly people susceptible ; the susceptibility of the foolish, encourages the gossip to play upon their infirmity of character.

There is no stronger symptom of insignificance, than to be touchy ! The moment a person's position is definite, he ceases to be anxious concerning the slights of society ; while those by birthright placed above the little impertinences of the little, are incapable of surmising the possibility of affront. Susceptibility on such points, is an almost unfailing symptom of *a raw*.

There is some reason that we know not of, why Lady Manly should resent her visit not being returned with sufficient celerity ; there is some latent motive for the flush that overspreads poor Mordaunt's brow, when unable to catch Lord Cecil's eye for a bow, at the theatre. We should not have set ourselves to the task of inquiring why the notice of such people was important to them, but for their resentment of an offence,

after all, perhaps, imaginary. It is like a man scudding along a wall, in the consciousness that his coat is out at elbows. "Ne faut pas parler de corde dans la maison d'un pendu !" says a French adage ; and when we see a man resent an allusion to Tyburn, we have a right to suppose that the rope has acted its part in the family history.

Be this a hint to susceptible people, lest their infirmity of temper expose them to unjust suspicions. "I am certain he was talking at *me* !"—"That show up was at *my* expense !" are phrases serving as finger-posts to secret infirmities. How should we know that Mrs. Dove was overbearing in her *ménage*, but for her insisting that she was caricatured in the heroine of some shrew-contemning novel ?—How conjecture that Colonel Lawless had exhibited the better part of valour in the Burmese war, but for his calling out some lawyer's clerk for jesting, in his presence, upon the white feather ?

Some people consider this sort of susceptibility an amiable weakness ; and apologise

for having been cold or ungracious without a cause, on the score of their "foolish sensitiveness." Foolish, indeed—*worse* than foolish. Touchiness is one of the most paltry phases of egotism and vanity. It is only those with whom self is ever uppermost, who dream of being touchy. There are some persons so singularly constituted, that, go where they may, do what they will, their own shadow, grown gigantic, seems projected before them, as if to convict them of a perpetual attempt to eclipse the sun. They can see nothing in nature but themselves. Every thing said, thought, written by the rest of the world, must bear reference to *them*. The result is, that the rest of the world becomes unanimous in thinking them insupportable.

Conscious of unpopularity, they live in terror of slight. As it is impossible that others should appreciate them at the inordinate value they set upon themselves, they *must* find themselves disparaged. They *must* experience the affront of precedence given to the Duke of Wellington for valour, and Luttrell for wit. Try to get at the origin of some author's animosity to-

wards you, and you will learn that you took the liberty of doing justice to Bulwer in his presence, when you must have known that such exaggerated praise of a rival could not be agreeable. Or inquire the motive of Lady Ridlemaree's omitting you from her last ball,—you will be told that you offended her, by giving due praise to the serene loveliness of Lady Jocelyn. Wounded vanity is the true origin of all touchiness.

To public men, this infirmity is a serious disqualification. Susceptibility in such cases amounts to an admission of vulnerability; it is the act of publishing by sound of trumpet the exact measure of his strength, or rather of his weakness.

A touchy man, in the House of Commons, sets himself up as a target. The young members delight in taking a rise out of him. It is a sort of badger-bait for the lovers of illegitimate sport. Such men are always starting up, or launching out, under the influence of whips and stings from invisible hands, like Caliban capering under the impish inflictions of Prospero. Their bodies, like that of the son of Sycorax, are filled with pains and aches. But where is

the enemy?—Every where!—They see their tormentors in the smooth face that smiles upon them, and expect an agonizing gripe from the friendly hand extended towards their own!

Public men have died, — ay! actually died, and the worms have eaten them—from the influence of this morbid susceptibility. Not merely by bringing quarrels upon themselves to be decided at the rapier's point; but under the influence of slights attributed by their touchiness to their sovereign, or ingratitude, to the nation. The perpetual hair-shirt of wounded self-love has eventually worn out their constitution. Touchiness sends great men to the tomb, just as it sends lesser ones to Coventry.

If the foolish and vulgar enjoyed a monopoly of this painful frailty, we might say, "let them fancy that the windmills are making war upon them—no matter!" But, unluckily, touchiness is also one of the follies of the wise. Read Pope's correspondence; consult the Memoirs of Swift; turn over the pages of Scaliger; listen to

the howlings of Warburton ; reflect upon the miseries of Shenstone, touchy, not only for himself, but for his Leasowes. Above all, Rousseau :—Rousseau's life was a never-ending warfare against imaginary insults. From the Pope down to the gentle duchesses on whose knees like a spoiled child he was cherished, all were aggressors. The eloquent and enlightened Jean Jacques, in his bursts of irritability and touchiness, betrayed himself as belonging to the class described by himself as “ n'ayant pas en elles ce fonds de tendresse qui fait accepter l'imperfection de l'être humain—ces personnes qui sont bonnes et affectueuses seulement quand elles rêvent.” In his writings, he was a philosopher ; in real life, a petulant child !

Nothing appears more troublesome to individuals, who, on their own side, are possessed of this *fonds de tendresse*—this generous disposition, this forbearance, this tendency to live and let live,—than to find themselves in contact with those less lavishly endowed, who are continually imagining causes for dissension, and displaying wounds to be salved over.

People so thinskinnd that every little rub produces a gangrene, cease at length to excite commiseration. Let their qualities be what they may, others, of inferior merit, who are more *facile à vivre*, will be preferred as companions. However exciting the sport, to fish in troubled waters becomes, in the long run, tedious. We like to feel sure when about to meet an old friend, whether he is likely to fold us in his arms, or run us through the body. We grow tired of even the most favoured correspondent, who is always signing himself "the madly-used Malvolio." We prefer stars of inferior magnitude, if less liable to conceal themselves by fits and starts in the clouds. We choose our friends to be what the French call *d'un commerce sûr*. Equality of humour, the equality proceeding from a fair estimate of our own claims, and a generous estimate of those of others, is in social life an indispensable qualification.

The offence, however, carries its own penalty. The man who is always fancying that you "bite your thumb at *him*,"—the

man, who, to borrow Hood's most piquant simile,

—to his own sharp fancies a prey,
Lies like a hedgehog, roll'd up the wrong way,
Tormenting himself with his prickles,

is more to be pitied, than if those prickles were the spears of an enemy. His enemy could not be *always* a-tilt for single combat; but at what hour of the twenty-four is the monomaniac safe from his own antagonism? Like Harpagon, he seizes himself by the arm, as the robber who has despoiled him of his treasure!

And then the mortification to a touchy person of having it proved to him that he has been fencing with a shadow;—the vexation of having to own himself in the wrong. And how easy to deceive ourselves concerning the attacks made upon our self-love! Many years ago, the writer of these sketches produced at Drury Lane Theatre a comedy, entitled "Lords and Commons," in which that excellent comedian, William Farren, enacted the part of an old Nabob, admirably costumed, according to his conception.

of the part. Immediately on his entrance, a murmur of disapprobation arose, for which at the moment it was difficult to assign a motive. The following day, several newspaper critics noticed with regret that the part should have been dressed at a well-known individual, noted for his harmless eccentricities, &c., &c., while more familiar friends exclaimed, "a shameful show up of JEREMY BENTHAM!—The wig, especially, was a facsimile!"

The comedy and the wig were soon afterwards laid on the shelf together. But to this day, a warm devotee of old Jeremy continues to reproach us with the treachery of our attack upon "an eminent old man, who ought to have been an object of respect to a young writer."

Mr. Bunn's amusing "Memoirs of the Stage" threw new light upon the matter. The wig in question was fated to become as much an object of contention as the lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermor's hair, the origin of the charming poem of Pope.

On the appearance of Scribe's brilliant comedy of "Bertrand et Raton," under the

name of "The Minister and the Mercer," general indignation was excited in the royal and ministerial circles, by the appearance of Farren in the part of the ambitious intrigant, in a wig said to be a facsimile of the one worn by Talleyrand at the Congress of Vienna!—

The King signified his displeasure to the Lord Chamberlain—the Lord Chamberlain to the manager—the manager to the imprudent histrion. It was by no means certain that a rupture between England and France might not be the result of this insult offered to the French Ambassador. Lord Grey, then at the head of the administration, attended at the theatre to verify the delinquency.

The offending wig thus resented by his Majesty's Government as an offence to good order, and sworn to by hundreds as a deliberate copy from the peculiar and well-known head-dress of Talleyrand, was the identical one worn in the part of Sir Caleb Cabob, and also sworn to by scores as a caricature of Jeremy Bentham!—

So much for the accuracy of peoples

impressions on such points. So much for the folly of taking to oneself a random shot !

There is a man who would be clever and agreeable but for the solitary foible of touchiness, who "dies daily" from the self-appropriation of random shots. He fancies himself the object of every whisper, every smile, every caricature, every joke circulated in the circle of his acquaintance ! Sir John Sensitive once gained a contested election, and kept his bed for six weeks afterwards, from the severe wounds inflicted by the ordinary squibs of the hustings. Sir John Sensitive once paid his court to the prettiest woman in his county, and was on the eve of acceptance ; when her ladyship happening to say, in his presence, that she disliked lawyers, he drew off and took affront, because his great-grandfather happened to have been Master of the Rolls. Sir John Sensitive has fought three duels ; one with his bosom friend for joking with him about a grammatical fault in his pamphlet on Catholic Emancipation ; one with the member for his county on the strength

of his allusion in parliament to certain landowners of intolerant principles in the large and populous county he had the honour to represent ; and the third, with a gentleman of distinguished merit and talent, whom he persisted in mistaking for H.B., just as he had persisted in mistaking himself for the original of one of the clever *croquis* of that successful caricaturist.

Sweet Sir John ! be warned.—The last bullet of the Freischutz may await thee.

Three have proved true—

The fourth thou mayst rue!

Take patience !—The world is wide enough to allow even so great a man to pass unnoticed. Conquer thy perilous irritabilities, and rise superior to the weakness of those pigmies on stilts, whom we have designated under the name of SUSCEPTIBLE PEOPLE.

PLAUSIBLE PEOPLE

IN society, as in the arts, as in literature,
as in politics, or in fifty other things,

The world is still deceived by ornament.

Not alone by gems of price, "barbaric gold and pearl;"—but by Birmingham gilding as well as barbaric gold,—by glass beads as well as orient pearl. Though aware that "there be counterfeits abroad," we accept people on their own showing; albeit that showing bear as much proportion to the reality, as the portrait of a dwarf or giant placed before a booth at a fair, to the tall man or short woman exhibiting within!

It is a favourite jest with the French that you may knock a man down, provided you

preface the offence with the word "*pardon!*"
or, as the song runs,

qu'on peut tout faire,
Quand on le fait *poliment* !

In England, you may do what you like, provided you do it *plausibly*. Cant your way through life, with the seven deadly sins in your train, *not* asserting them to be angels, but wishing to goodness they were not *quite* so wicked, and humbly hoping that some day or other they may see the error of their ways, and you will pass for a heavenly-minded man. Deprecation, whether in tone, manner, or phraseology, is an universal pass-key. There is no knowing exactly where to convict such sinners. They envelop themselves in such a thick coating of sackcloth and ashes, that there is some difficulty in finding out the vulnerable points. Their hypocrisy is a sort of shifting shield, which, like the sails of a windmill, veer with your attack, and protect them in whatever direction they are approached.

According to Rochefoucault's definition of

a courtier, "*un homme sans humeur et sans honneur*," they never suffer themselves to be provoked out of their plausible equanimity. Ever gracious, ever placable, their humility is that of Tartuffe, their impassibility that of Talleyrand, who would not allow the person with whom he was conversing to discover, by the expression of his countenance, that he had received a kick from his enemy in the rear.

To this *sub*-human patience, however, they superadd more active propensities. The plausible person is essentially a talking animal,—an ambulatory puff,—an utterer of vauntings—"not loud, but deep." He accuses himself in the humblest tone of being guilty of all the cardinal virtues.

According to his own account, the circumstances attending *his* conduct are invariably extenuating. "He does not wish to praise himself," but he labours under the singular impunity attributed to the right divine of the throne: he can do no wrong. By some strange concatenation of events, he is impeccable. It would grieve him much that he should be supposed to pride

himself on this. Heaven forbid that he should be pharisaical in his virtue. On the contrary, humility has been esteemed his leading merit. But so it is, that when others fall into frailty, by some inherent quality (such as the leaden foundation of a Dutch tumbler), he is *forced* to stand upright.

The world, that wide-mouthed dupe, swallows all this as glibly as it is uttered. The man who anoints himself all over with the oil of laudation above his fellows, may pass through the eye of a needle, albeit as crooked as a camel. Smooth as a billiard-ball, and sticking at nothing, he makes his infallible way into the pocket, and secures the game. *His* is the virtue which, so far from being its own reward, obtains a premium from parliament, and sets itself up like a golden image for the adoration of the multitude.

Plausible people are the fatted kine of this world. They insinuate themselves like the weasel into the meal-tub ; or like Reynard, their stealthy steps make an unsuspected way into the hen-roost. While your

ears are still fascinated by their gentle protestations, you find they have been picking your locks, or your pocket. While the patriot praises himself for more than Spartan virtue, he is watching your eye for a favourable opportunity to escape up the back stairs, and sneak into the presence of royalty.—The next time you see him he will be on the Treasury Bench !

Another favourite form of plausibility, is to appear in the arena of life, trembling and defenceless, “ *sans armes comme l’innocence,*”

a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast.

You cannot tread upon a thing that crawls at your feet, and calls itself a worm. If it owned itself an asp, you would have a right to exterminate the reptile. “ But a poor, harmless, miserable, unoffending worm, that could not do mischief if it would, and would not if it could, you *would* not be such a monster as to set your foot upon its innocent head.”

Thus pleaded for by its own weakness, the worm of Nile establishes itself by your

hearth ; and one fine day, when you find yourself stung with mortal venom, the fatal wound proves to have proceeded from " the poor, harmless, miserable, unoffending worm, that could not do mischief if it would, and would not if it could ! " Whereupon you utter a few uncourteous remarks concerning Plausible People.

The force of endeavour will do wonders towards acquiring the form and show of righteousness, by those who

Assume a virtue though they have it not.

In the crowd of beggars that surround a travelling-carriage at the foreign post-houses, some halt, some blind, some maimed—all screaming for charity,—it requires the eye of a policeman to detect the genuine cripple, and make the dumb speak. If the uninitiated pretend to perform Duke Humphry's miracle, and make the lame man fling aside his crutches, and fly the field, they are sure to hit upon the wrong man, so cunning are the impostors. So is it with the Plausible. By dint of strenuously pretending to be good, wise, or zealous, they contract almost

the form and pressure of virtue and wisdom. A jeweller could scarcely detect the pure gold from the crysocal. Though we positively *know* that it is the clown preaching in the sacerdotal robe of Sir Topaz, we cannot help listening with reverence to his exposition of the doctrines of the Metempsychosis. He looks so *very* grave—he talks so *very* learnedly! Our prejudices must have deceived us. The man so *very* like the chaplain, *cannot* be the fool!

Above all, it is scarcely possible to detect a plausible woman. Had Messalina chosen to array herself in a vestal's robe, and take her part in the procession as a bearer of the sacred fire, by due gravity of deportment she would have secured the respect of the multitude. So, in our own times, a quaker's dress is the favourite disguise of the least reputable frequenters of masquerades; and enormous professions of morality form the distinguishing feature of belles of higher degree who have lapses of honour to conceal behind that whited wall.

It is only in a faint whisper that the select few who listen to their chantings,

insinuate that "the lady doth protest too much;"—that such *very* strait-lacing usually purports to disguise imperfection in the shape.—The world, edified by her precepts of holiness, her *suspirium sanctorum*, cries "Hear, hear, hear," with all its lungs; and makes affidavit that the Venus de Medicis is not more free from deformity than the Sheldrake-invented form which so sweetly solicits approbation. How indeed should the public be savage, when addressed with the epithet "indulgent?"

When we see judges, juries, ordinaries of Newgate, police magistrates, and other public functionaries, whose hearts are supposed to have become as the nether millstone through much practice,—whose eyes, as those of the lynx,—whose ears, as those of the mole,—taken in year after year by the protestations of malefactors, and petitioning the Home Office for reprobates capable of picking the turnkey's pocket of their reprieve, or biting off the ear of the ordinary who has recommended them to mercy, it is impossible to wonder at the unsophistication which exposes the less

wary classes of the community to be quacked to death by plausible doctors, ruined in lawsuits by plausible solicitors, or won over to adoration by plausible moralists in prose and verse.

It is scarcely possible to be always on one's guard; and there is no mendicinity society of good company established for the due examination of people's claims. If, in dread of imposition, we refuse our obolus to the real Belisarius, we never forgive ourselves; or if we reject with nausea some over-sweetened cup of sweets, the leprous distilment is poured into the porches of our ears as into those of *Hamlet's* father, some afternoon when we are napping, and our scruples are set at eternal rest!

There is a certain Jonathan Wilson, Esq., a man to whom the hats of bankers fly off in the streets,—whose name figures as director of half-a-dozen companies, and governor of half-a-dozen institutions. The bankers reverence the governors and directors; the companies and institutions reverence the man who commands the respect of bankers; and, while standing like a co-

lossal Croesus, with a foot upon the necks of each, Jonathan Wilson can afford to be not worth a guinea.

Jonathan Wilson was the younger son of a younger brother, without a shilling he could by birthright call his own. Air is sorry food for any thing but cameleons and orchidaceous plants ;—more particularly to a man born like Jonathan Wilson, with an appetite for turtle and venison. After turning over in his mind the space to be measured between a dry crust and three courses and a dessert,—after examining, with a most curious eye, the turnpike roads which lead to the Temple of Fortune, such as industry, talent, and so forth, Jonathan decided upon attempting the by-path of Plausibility ; and as coachmen diminish the steepness of a hill by a zigzag course, began to insinuate himself up the steep ascent by a serpentine career, bowing and smiling on either side, as the sinuosities of his pathway seemed to justify.

Jonathan was mild in his demeanour ; gentle, patient, unpretending. Although he preached, because preaching was the

order of the day, his homilies were couched in Chesterfieldian phrase. He never mentioned hell to ears polite; but persuaded the good that they had regenerated him; the bad, that they had corrupted; and both, that it was their business to take care of their own.

After being adopted as confidential man to every body having confidence, that is money to dispose of, with the money of the few he soon commanded the respect of the many; and has now a mansion in Portland Place, a villa at Tottenham, and more turtle and venison than he can devour. He has acted as churchwarden, he has officiated as sheriff—he might be in parliament if he chose. But, according to the argument of the Danish sailors, who would not send Hamlet into England, because “all the men there were as mad as he,” Jonathan Wilson shirks an assemblage so eminently remarkable for its plausibility.

Has not this man speculated cunningly upon the gullibility of the world?—Yet Jonathan Wilson is a drop in the ocean of Plausible People.

THE
CHAPERON AND THE DEBUTANTE.

It is a curious fact, that almost all the by-words we have borrowed from the French language, have ceased to be used in a similar sense in their own country. The designation *débutante*, for instance, is only applied in France to first appearances at the theatre ; and the word *chaperon* is nearly obsolete. In the higher classes of Parisian society, unmarried girls are so rarely to be seen (never, unless under the protection of a parent), that an occasion seldom presents itself for the use of the terms *chaperon* and *débutante*.

Among ourselves, meanwhile, they have become naturalized. Among ourselves—where marriage, instead of being “dealt

with by attorneyship," and, consequently, placed within every one's power of attainment, is, as well as entering a business or a profession, the result of preference or caprice ; young ladies are introduced into society, in all the innocence of ringlets and white muslin, as soon as they are able to distinguish a quadrille from a polka—orgeat from lemonade ; and, whereas, at the same tender years, their youthful minds might not be equally skilled to discriminate between the good match and the pitiful younger brother,—the gentleman with serious intentions and the mere ball-room flirt,—the "wisdom of our ancestors" provides them with a female friend or relative as temporary guardian of their person ;—a full-dress governess, under whose turban is supposed to reside as much knowledge as under the wig of the Lord Chancellor, and under whose starched draperies is concentrated the discretion of a Mrs. Chapone.

In contemplating the soft, blushing, trembling, smiling Débutante, tricked up from head to foot as though she had just stepped out of a *Journal des Modes*, ready to

sink into the earth with confusion; under the gaze of the profane, we are tempted to exclaim with the poet :

Was ever thing so pretty made to stand ?

But a prosaic parody on the line suggests itself, the moment we turn towards her obligato accompaniment, the officious, lynx-eyed Chaperon, till we can scarcely resist murmuring

Was ever thing so fussy made to stand—*still* ?

One of the peculiar faculties of the experienced Chaperon is ubiquity. She is in all places at once; beside the refreshment table, in the card-room, watching the dancers; nay, retreat into the furthestmost and most flirtiferous corner of the ball-room, with the *Débutante* leaning on your arm—behind a door, a screen, a curtain, a rose-tree—and, on looking up, you will find the piercing grey eyes of the Chaperon fixed inquiringly upon your manœuvres !

They penetrate, like Perkins's steam gun, through a six-inch iron plate; and, as to common deal, it becomes diaphanic as

gauze, whenever the Chaperon approaches. Damask hangings are mere air when interposed between her and the object of her solicitude ; and, like hunger, she can eat through a stone wall, if divided for nefarious purposes from her kitling. Parents and guardians, nurses, governesses, turnkeys, keepers, inspectors of police, are not to be compared, in point of vigilance, with the Argus-like zeal of an accomplished Chaperon.

The Chaperon is usually a spinster, having much leisure and little superfluity of coin ; or a widow, without offspring of her own ; or a matron, who, having married off her own daughters, is desirous to benefit the rising generation with the results of her experience. The mother, accompanying her children into society, and exercising her maternal solicitude in their behalf, does not come under the denomination of Chaperon. It is usually with interested views that the gratuitous office is undertaken.

The Débutante in want of a Chaperon, is often the daughter of a widower, to whom it is good to make apparent that so tender and

valuable a protectress would be still tenderer and more valuable as a step-mother. In other instances, the office is assumed by the prudent spinster, having no equipage of her own, with a view of being franked to the various fêtes for which she has secured invitations. By a spinster still further removed from the world's favour, the post of Chaperon to an attractive Débutante is actually sought as a letter of introduction to the pleasures of society.

Miss Clarissa Spyington, for instance, being well aware that the rich and lovely Helena Lennox will be invited to all the best balls of the season, prevails upon the young lady's guardian, her cousin, Sir Paul Spyington, the wealthy banker of Portland Place, to institute her as Chaperon to the heiress. In order to do honour to her office, she even stoops to assume brevet rank; and, thenceforward, prints herself upon her cards "Mrs. Spyington;"—a matronly designation that invites confidence, and repels raillery.

Sir Paul is certainly so far justified in his election, that the maiden lady, whether as

Miss or Mistress, is admirably qualified for the discharge of her duties. Having simpered away the days of her own debutancy at Bath, so long ago that the memory of her charms has passed away with that of the beauship of Nash, or minuet of Tyson, she has since successively paraded the parades of all the watering-places in the three kingdoms. The pantiles could swear to the tread of her Spanish leather slipper. The Steyne prates of her whereabouts. Cheltenham, Malvern, Leamington, Harrowgate, Weymouth, Ramsgate — nay, even the esplanade of Beulah Spa, have their tales to tell of the marchings and counter-marchings of the un-fair Clarissa.

In the course of these transitions, Mrs. Spyington has necessarily picked up useful knowledge, “as pigeons peas.” She has the peerage, baronetage, and even the voluminous records of Burke’s Landed Gentry at her fingers’ ends; with all their family histories, genealogies, arms, and emblazonments. Let not, therefore, the partner aspiring to the hand of the charming Helena Lennox in the waltz, presume

to give himself out as one of the "Heathcotes of Rutlandshire." Mrs. Spyington will detect his vain pretences ; Mrs. Spyington will put him in his place. Before he had been twice in company with the *Débutante*, Mrs. Spyington managed to ascertain that he was only a young barrister, the son of "people in Baker Street ;" people without a country seat, whom she remembered in cheap lodgings at Broadstairs ; people comprised under the comprehensive designation of "the Lord knows who."

It was not for such a man to be seen dancing a second time in the course of the evening with the heiress of the late Sir Hector Lennox, of Lennox Castle.

But it is not alone with the name and nature of the *Débutante's* partner she is conversant. The Chaperon is familiar with the birth, breeding, and history of everybody, in every room she enters. Not a carriage drives along Portland Place, but, from the arms and livery, she can predicate concerning the names and fortunes of its owners, as a gipsy reads them in the

lines of a hand that has been duly crossed with silver or gold. Nay, when at fault concerning the features of some consequential dowager, the Chaperon is able to identify her by her very diamonds.

“That must be the Dowager Marchioness of Methuselah; I remember her at Queen Charlotte’s Drawing Rooms, in the early part of the present century, when I always had a Star Chamber ticket from a friend in the Board of Works. Lady Methuselah was then a very sweet woman. I have a perfect recollection of her in that very aigrette and bouquet, in a yellow crape hoop, looped up with white acacias and Roman pearls. It was just when there was the talk of an invasion. The Marchioness’s charming daughters were at that time unmarried. Lady Maria is now the Duchess of Dunderhead; but Lady Harriet made a poor match—Lady Harriet, poor thing, is only Lady Harriet Titmouse. The Titmouses have a fine estate in Essex, but they are no great things. Between ourselves, I have heard it whispered in their neighbourhood, that the grandfather of the present

Titmouse was a Sheriff of London, citizen and cordwainer, or some dreadful thing of that description. But the Marchioness, of course, knows not a syllable of the matter. The Marchioness, like all those belonging to that venerable old court of Queen Charlotte, is exceedingly nice on such points. Any one may perceive with a glance that the Marchioness is a conservative. She has not varied so much as the set of her diamonds for the last fifty years. In these fantastical days, it is not so easy to identify a woman by her jewels. Reform, reform, reform, in every direction. And pray admire the result! All the beautiful old breastknots and stomachers, which were shamefully transformed into aigrettes, buckles, and broaches a few years ago, are actually being converted into stomachers again; for family diamonds are treated with as little reverence as a close borough or a sinecure. Ah! things would be very differently managed if we had a few more such women in the world as the Marchioness of Methuselah."

At first, the *Débutante* is charmed with the loquacity of her Chaperon, which serves as a cover to her timidity. By degrees, she learns to prize it on other accounts. While Mrs. Spyington gabbles on about the Marchioness, of whom she knows nothing, Miss Lennox is enabled to give her attention to the Mr. Heathcote of whom her Chaperon wishes *her* to know nothing; and who profits by the monologue of the lady in the turban, to place himself in Paradise close at the ear of Eve.

But it is not so easy to deceive the vigilance of the professional dragon. Though the Chaperon, like the "blind mole, hears not a footfall," she has an intuitive sense of the approach of danger; and, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings long before the hovering hawk is perceptible to human eyes, Mrs. Spyington, though the son of the "people in Baker Street" is invisible, crooks her arm like the pinion of a well-trussed fowl, twitches off the *Débutante* into a less dangerous neighbourhood, and plants her on a bench of dowagers, unapproachable by anything short of

the Duke of Wellington, or the conqueror of the Hesperides.

Whenever a tender *Débutante* is seen thus guarded round with turbans, ruffs, ruffles, and India shawls, let it be understood that she is in limbo—in durance, not vile, but illustrious; a sort of honorary ward in Chancery; like the crown jewels in the Tower of London, seen by candlelight through a grating.

It is a curious branch of ball-room science to examine, step by step, the mental progress of the *Débutante* of another class—Miss Tibbs. At her first ball, her perceptions are vivid, her impulses natural. Enchanted to have escaped from the school-room, Mrs. Marcet's Rational conversations, Herz's exercises, roast mutton, and rice pudding,—to have exchanged jacconot or merino for silk or tulle, and the heavy morocco slipper for one of sandalled satin,—the first twang of Weippert's harp, as she enters the dancing-room,

Takes her imprison'd soul
And laps it in Elysium.

The clustered lights of the chandeliers and

girandoles dazzle her unpractised eyes ; the glitter of jewels, the gleam of satins, the glow of flowers, excite the flutter of her girlish spirits. The very heart within her twitters as she hears her name announced, and sees a hundred admiring eyes directed towards her new dress:—with how different a pulsation, alas ! from the tender anxieties she is likely to experience in re-entering the same scene six months afterwards.

Unless provided with a Chaperon of real and acknowledged merit, that is, of extensive connexions and persevering officiousness, the young lady, at her first *entrée*, trembles for her chance of a partner. What if all the pains bestowed upon her well-starched petticoat, her satin slip, and aërophane tunic, her transparent stocking, close-fitting shoe, and still closer-fitting glove (for to be *bien ganté* is beginning to be an article of ball-room religion in London, as it has always been in Paris) ; what if the anxious care bestowed by Monsieur Rigodon for the last ten years on her feet, and by Monsieur Isidore, for the last half-hour on her head, in order that the *bandeaux*

of the one may be as exquisitely smooth as the *pas de bourrées* of the other, should end in her being fated to sit still all the evening, and write herself down "a bencher of the inner temple" of Terpsichore !

Agitated by these misgivings, she wonders to see her Chaperon take her place deliberately in the card-room, as though there were no such things as quadrilles and waltzes in the world,—as though people came to a ball to shuffle their cards instead of their feet. Thus placed, however, she commands a view of the dancing-room ; and, by dint of edging forward her seat, (to the indignation of a corpulent gentlewoman into whose knees she carelessly inserts the angular corner of the chair she is coaxing, edgeways, to the front rank), manages to place herself within view of the young gentlemen lounging up and down, in order to pass in review the belles of the evening. One or other of them, she fancies, cannot fail to be struck by the elegance of her costume and manners. Her great difficulty consists in preserving the downcast air, insisted upon

by her Chaperon as indispensable to the character of a *Débutante*, and keeping sufficiently on the alert to ascertain whether anything eligible in the way of partnership is approaching.

During the first five minutes, she is convinced that every young gentleman in a white cravat, waistcoat, and kids, with varnished pumps and cobweb stockings, long straight hair, and short curled whiskers, who looks a second time at her, has "intentions." But alas! they pass and make no sign! "Another and another still succeeds;" the fiddles quavering, the violoncello grunting, the harp twanging, the flageolet squeaking invitingly all the time.—Still, alas! no partner!

At length, one of those who had gazed most fixedly upon her charms (a slim adolescent, in a flashy waistcoat and black cravat, against whom, the moment she caught sight of him, she decided in the negative, as "a shocking style of man"), accosts the lady of the house; and, while directing her observation towards the corner where the hapless *Débutante* is ensconced,

is evidently asking an introduction to "the lovely creature in white crape with pink roses."

The breath of the Débutante comes short ! She is undecided what to do. He is certainly ill-calculated to make a figure in her journal. She fears he will not do to write about in her next letter to dear Matilda, at Brighton. Ten to one his name is Smith—"JOHN SMITH !" or he may be an ensign in a marching regiment, or a banker's clerk, or a clergyman's younger son !

She has half a mind to decline dancing altogether. Yet it seems ill-natured to refuse a young man who means well, and has done nothing to offend her ; and, after all, an indifferent partner is better than no partner at all. Moreover, when once seen figuring in an "*en avant deux*" she is sure of having crowds of eligibles at her feet.

On the whole, therefore, she thinks it better to be placable ; and, as the lady of the house advances towards her, followed by the agitated youth, kneading in his hands the edges of his new silk hat by

way of keeping himself in countenance, she looks the other way, and tries to appear as unconcerned as she can. Fancying that the eyes of the whole room are upon her, the elated Débutante trembles lest her perturbation should be too plainly visible through the folds of her lace tucker.

The lady of the house is now opposite, bending towards her, as well as a hard steel busk and a corset as rigid as a bench of Middlesex magistrates, will admit; till all the feathers of her satin hat are set nodding by the discomposure of her equilibrium. The Débutante, meanwhile, feels her colour rising with contending emotions. But it rises still higher, when she hears her corpulent neighbour addressed by the lady of the house with, "Will you give me leave, my dear Mrs. Hobbleshaw, to present to you the only son of your old friend, Lady Pinchbeck? Sir Thomas is a stranger in town, and vastly desirous of the honour of your acquaintance." Whereupon the young gentleman in yellow kids bows awkwardly, and taking his station behind the chair of the corpulent gentlewoman,

commences an interesting dialogue, and turns his back upon the Débutante for the remainder of the evening.

The poor girl is ready to cry with vexation. She would not have come to the ball, had she expected to be so treated ! Nor does her irritation diminish when her Chaperon turns towards her, at the close of the third rubber, with the inquiry of " Miss Tibbs, my love, havn't you been dancing?—Dear me, how provoking !—It is all on account of your hiding yourself in that foolish corner.—Wouldn't you like to take some refreshment ?"

Cramped with sitting three hours and a half upon a cane-bottomed chair, the Débutante is right glad to hook herself to the Chaperon's arm, elbow her way into the refreshment-room, and, while waiting half an hour for her turn to approach the table, and feeling the roses of her trimming crushed flat as crown-pieces in the throng, she accepts the offer of some vanille ice, receives it over the head of a squat lady at the risk of dislodging it into her neighbour's turban or her own

bosom ; and, after soiling her gloves with a wet spoon, and getting her elbow jogged at every mouthful, to the imminent risk of her white satin slip, is anxious to crush her way back again into the dancing-room.

The Chaperon, however, is still diligently at work on an overflowing plate of lobster salad, to which tongue and chicken, or a slice of *galantine*, are likely to succeed. *She* has managed to obtain a snug berth for herself at the supper table ; and is ensconced, with a glass of champagne at her right-hand, and a tumbler of sherry and water at her left, without any idea of giving in for twenty minutes to come.

The Chaperon has constitutionally, an untirable voracity. She is the shark of the female world. Like her prototype, the Dragon of Wantley, she is able to devour houses and steeples (of spun sugar and Savoy cake), and wash them down with an ocean of Roman punch. Throughout her six rubbers per night, she continues to imbibe, every ten minutes, glasses of negus in winter,—of ice in sum-

mer; solidified by basketsful of sponge-biscuits and maccaroons, which disappear as if thrown into a lime-kiln.

Like affection's dream,
They leave no trace behind.

The *Débutante*, on the contrary, "scarcely confesses that her appetite is more to bread than stone." Like other humming-birds, she is nourished upon saccharine suction. It suffices for *her* to look once a day at a spoonful of minced veal; and, like the boa constrictor, to make a heavy meal once a month, on—the wing of a partridge. Unless accidentally detected at her private luncheon, the *Débutante* was never seen to eat!

At the close of the Chaperon's prolonged repast, feeling thoroughly restored, she observes aloud to her charge, "Well,—now that we have made ourselves quite comfortable again, I am sure, my dear, you would like to dance." The couple of sovereigns she has netted, incline her to return to the card-table; and as the *Débutante*, who is musing over the destruction of her ball-dress in the crowd, remains pensively silent, the Chaperon sidles up to

their hostess, and executes a mysterious whisper, to which the weary lady in the hat and feathers, who has been courtseying for the last three hours and three quarters, with various signs of condescension, replies by an assenting nod.

The result of this diplomatic conference becomes apparent, when, five minutes afterwards, the lady brings up for judgment a genteel youth in nankeen pantaloons, an inch or two of whose meagre wrists are perceptible between the dress-coat he has outgrown and the overgrown gloves which wrinkle down over his thumbs ; and whose straight, yellow hair is combed up, tent-wise, on the top of his head, like the brass flame with which the gas manufactories crown the ornamental bronze vases on their gate-posts ; a shapeless booby, whose only care is not to giggle during the presentation.

“ You *must* dance with him—it is her own nephew ;” whispers the Chaperon, foreseeing the refusal of her charge ; and with indignant soul, accordingly, poor Adeliza Tibbs deposits her fan and bouquet, and stands up, for the first time of her life,

in the most insignificant corner of the most insignificant quadrille that has been danced in the course of the evening.

Nevertheless, the display, poor as it is, revives her spirits. She sees a tall, distinguished-looking young man, her *vis-à-vis*, inquire her name; and decides that he intends to invite her for the next dance. She is sure he is meditating an introduction.

Previous, however, to the final *chassé croisé* of the odious set into which she has been betrayed, the Chaperon glides insidiously towards her with intelligence that "the carriage has been waiting for the last hour; that her papa is terribly particular about his horses; and that she faithfully promised Mr. Tibbs not to keep either his coachman or daughter out after two o'clock."

The boa and mantle, pendent upon her skinny arm, attest the firmness of her sinister intentions; and the poor *Débutante*, having no engagement to plead in opposition, is muffled up, and carried off in triumph. Not choosing to confide the

mortifications of the evening to the attendant by whom she is disrobed, she is forced to pretend fatigue as the origin of her fallen countenance when her mangled ball-dress is held up to her commiseration, with an exclamation of "How you *must* have danced, Mem, to have been squeegeed to pieces in this way!"

Three months afterwards, the Débutante, even when not endowed with the weighty attractions of a Miss Helena Lennox, has, probably, contrived to recommend herself so far to the civilities of the dancing world, as to be sure of partners to her heart's content. The finest optical glass in Dollond's shop would not *now* enable her to discern the hapless youth in the nankeen continuations; although he contrives to cross her path fifty times at every ball, and obtrude as her *vis-à-vis* whenever she has the misfortune to undergo a partner not sufficiently adroit to provide one of her own selection.

The Débutante has now become fine, choice, exclusive. She has no further objection to the permanent establishment

of her Chaperon in the card-room ; having succeeded in persuading that august functionary that the crowd in the doorway often renders it impossible to rejoin her between the dances. She is engaged three deep, both for waltz and quadrille ; and, lest she should be missed by her *cavalier* at the moment the dance is making up, contrives to be passed from partner to partner, throughout the evening, like an Irish vagabond handed from parish to parish, all the way from Dover to Holyhead.

You may see her smiling in succession upon the arm of every beau in the room. Majors, captains, lieutenants, cornets, ensigns ; “ the three black graces—law, physic, and divinity ;” raw baronets, and hobble-de-hoy heirs-apparent, claim her successively as their own.

“T is “ Si, signor ;”

“T is “ Ja, mein herr ;”

“T is “ S’il vous plait, monsieur.”

To all, and each, she utters the same emphasised fractions of common-place, broken up with a view to sweeten polite conversation. The room is shockingly hot,

or dreadfully crowded. Strauss's last waltz is infinitely prettier than all the rest ; or, she really wonders even the chairs can stand still, when Jullien is playing.

To fifteen partners an evening, does she show her teeth, her wit, and the point of her white satin slipper. The captain, who has the misfortune to snap the encrusted sticks of her fan *à-la Louis XIV.*, is now a " horrid creature ;" the major who procures her tickets for the rehearsal at the opera, a " charming man." When hurried into her father's carriage at the close of four hours' incessant flirtation and salutation, the Débutante is as much elated with her conquests, real or imaginary, as the Chaperon with the game bagged in her card purse.

Three months after this, another change has come over the spirit of her dream. The major is *now* a " horrid creature ;" and she will hear of nothing included in the pages of the army-list, under a G.C.B. She can recognise a younger brother by the sit of his coat, and prattles of " scorpions" and " detrimentals" like the worst of them ;

is shocked at the idea of labouring through a quadrille more than once or twice in the course of the evening ; and is sure to be engaged for the two first waltzes before she enters the ball-room.

Instead of casting down her eyes, as at first exacted by her Chaperon, her enfranchised looks challenge every living soul around her ; and the finical Adeliza has even mounted an eye-glass, through which, with a scornful smile, she scrutinises the Dissonance's lace of fat Mrs. Hobbleshaw. She has actually refused Sir Thomas Pinchbeck ; and is suspected of a design upon the hand of the Honourable Henry Hottentot.

While the *Débutante* has been thus progressing in her accomplishments, the Chaperon has not been inactive. It is owing to her instructions that Miss Tibbs has acquired so precocious an insight into the mysteries of the peerage, and such accurate powers of detecting the "complement external" of a younger brother. It is the Chaperon who has finessed for invitations for her ; and spread advantageous rumours of the amount of her father's fortune ; to

which (sinking the claims of two brothers at Rugby, one at the Naval College, and another at Woolwich, all of whom the Chaperon elliptically passes over) she is *nearly* the heiress.

No numeration table is sufficiently comprehensive for the number of Miss Tibbs's suitors and refusals! The Chaperon will not hear of her settling at present. Having serious intentions of accompanying her to Cheltenham for the autumn, and Brighton for the winter, she suggests that it would be a pitiful thing to accept a Sir Thomas Pinchbeck, a mere country baronet with a wretched two thousand a-year, who would not be able to afford her so much as a box at the opera. Her dear Adeliza's acquaintance is now so much extended, that there is no surmising what might be the result of "another season." The Chaperon has had a private hint of an Irish peer who is immensely struck, and going to Cheltenham, in the express hope of meeting the sweet girl to whom he lost his heart in a gipsy party at Beulah Spa.

The D butante (who, thanks to the

grandiloquence of her Chaperon concerning the ways and means of the house of Tibbs, has now nine obedient humble servants in the household brigade, to say nothing of lancers and light dragoons, an Irish member, and a saucy clerk in the Treasury is now beginning to think imperial Tokay of herself, and will not hear of derogation. She treats her Chaperon like a Turk ; and comes and goes at the hours that suit her, without regard to the horses or the lady in the turban. She insists upon the footman serving her breakfast in gloves ; will not take a glass of water from the hands of her maid, unless brought on a salver ; talks politics with the Irish member ; is of opinion that Sir Robert is the person to save the country ; calls the dear Duke " our own Coriolanus ;" and is about as silly and conceited a little Miss as any in her Majesty's dominions.

In a higher walk of life, the *Débutante* is a less specific personage. Lady Sophia (whose first appearance at Almack's, after her presentation at Court, places her in a scarcely more public position than she has

been occupying, evening after evening, for four years previous, at the country-seat of her father, the earl) is a very different person from the blushing, fluttering, giggling Miss Tibbs. All that the Débutante of the middle classes is left to discover from personal experience, *she* has learnt from the experience of others. In her very accidence, she was too knowing to mistake a younger for an elder son—a new knight for an old baronet; and as to showy officers, the whole army-list figures, in her imagination, as a set of nobodies, not worth a thought, till they attain the rank of field officers; the army being an *omnium gatherum*, into which fathers of families thrust their supernumerary sons, who are good for nothing else.

Lady Sophia does not vary her pretensions, or cast her nature twice a-year, like the less illustrious Miss Adeliza Tibbs.

Blushes, God help you, *she* has none to lose, Sir!

She was born self-possessed; and never knew what it was to be flurried by a partner or a declaration. Instead of humbly fol-

lowing in the wake of fashion, *she* heads the procession ; invents flounces—introduces a new *capote*—is great at private theatricals—assumes to herself, without apology, the part of Helen or Venus in a *tableau*—rattles through the *chansonnettes* of Levassor ; and all this with such perfect ease of high-breeding and pretence at decorum, that—

The holy priests bless her when she is riggish.

Lady Sophia has no fears concerning her settlement in life. The Duke of Belton and her father have long arranged an alliance between their respective children. But, even were she not tacitly affianced to the Marquis, one or other of her father's numerous nephews, or guests, or constituents, would be readily attracted by the merits of a damsel so well born, with a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. "The Morning Post," and "The Book of Beauty," taking care that her claims to distinction shall not be overlooked, she is as well advertised as Cox and Savory's hunting-watches ; and Lady Sophia is one of those *Débutantes*

who have no chance of degenerating into Chaperons, unless to daughters of their own.

Of Miss Tibbs, on the other hand, the destinies are less accurately defined by fate. Like all *Débutantes* who fall into the frailty of flirting, it is probable she will come in time to be opprobriated as a coquette, or shunned as a jilt. The roses will shed their leaves, and the thorns become apparent. The brothers at Rugby, Woolwich, and the Naval College, will grow up ; and, accompanying her into society, supersede all false notions of her consequence, and the services of the superannuated Chaperon. The Mrs. Hobbleshaw, whom she has quizzed, and the Sir Thomas Pinchbeck, whom she has rejected, will seize upon this moment for revenge.

As years progress with the mortified damsel, they will preserve a perpetual memorandum of the date of her *début* ; thanks to which, the world is privileged to discover that her bloom is less variable than of old ; her ringlets less liable to the

effect of damp than when they were the native produce of her empty head.

New Débutantes will display their round fair forms in afflicting contrast with her bony rectangularity. She will be set aside like a last year's almanack, or obsolete edition.

The Chaperon, to whom the worthy Mr. Tibbs unites himself in his dotage in gratitude for her extreme care of his daughter and coach-horses,—will now recommend her to try a fresh line of business, and attempt a new *début* as a blue—or serious young lady—or political economist,—or something still more novel and original.

But Adeliza has grown weary of her vocation. A second *début*, she knows, is like a second attack of small-pox—invariably fatal; and stranger things have happened than her taking refuge from the ignominy of spinsterhood, under the wing of the quondam young gentleman of the nankeens, now a thriving country banker in drab shorts and mahogany tops; whose yellow crest has given way to a sober bald-

ness, highly becoming the position of a man well-to-do in the world.

It would have been a bold attempt, however, to hazard a prediction of such a termination to her career, when she first blushed her way into society under the care of her CHAPERON, as an aspiring DÉBUTANTE.

THE CABINET MINISTRESS.

CABINET MINISTERS have been often and ably portrayed, both by themselves and others. But there is one portion of the Cabinet Minister—*i. e.*, his better-half—that still remains to be delineated; an anomalous individual, to whom the nation supplies a local habitation, and for whom, henceforward, we shall supply a name. For there is no more reason why Ambassador should have its feminine in the vernacular, than Minister; and we propose henceforward to follow the example of the Germans, in whose provincial towns you may hear announced, “Mrs. Deputy Sub-Inspectress of the Royal and Imperial Mines and Forests;” or “Mrs. Upper-Land-Stewardess of the Parochial District of so-and-so.”

The Cabinet Ministress is, in our opi-

nion, an ill-used person, considering the large portion of the business of the State gratuitously harnessed upon her fair shoulders. The Cabinet Ministress is, in fact, the great unpaid—*sans* salary, *sans* perquisites, *sans* patronage, *sans* everything;—yet expected to be the obedient humble servant of the throne and the public every hour of the day—every day in the year, from eight o'clock in the morning till six the morning following, from the 1st of January to the 31st of December.

The Cabinet Ministress has no quarter, and no quarter-day. She works like a slave; and, if refractory, is reminded, like other slaves, that the hour of emancipation will be the hour of her ruin; that it is Lombard Street to a China orange; that she must either be the Cabinet Ministress and a drudge, or plain Lady Titmouse and a nobody.

We might have hesitated to draw public attention towards a character apparently of a private nature, were it not that our present Premier and his predecessor are wi-

dowers.* No personality can be imputed. The kind-hearted being who should be now enjoying the honours and exercising the labours of *Première*ship, is at rest. "After life's fitful fever she sleeps well;" and the female history of Downing Street, for once, presents a blank.

The interregnum is, at least, favourable to the delineation of the unnatural task-work,

grief, and pain,
That has been, and may be again.

In the first place, the Cabinet Ministress has to endure, *par ricochet*, all the ill-humour of the throne. Whenever the Premier has shown himself stubborn with the King, his master, concerning a new war, new tax, new favourite, new antipathy,—concerning secret supplies or public animosities suggested by the voice of royalty, (not the less absolute for being still and small),—the queen-consort thinks it necessary to mark her resentment to the *Première*.

* Written in the late reign, during the administration of Lord Melbourne.

It is amazing in how many modes this may be effected. The French have taught us three hundred and sixty-five ways to dress eggs. The number of fashions in which sovereignty can trick up its displeasures is more than double! It speaks volumes in a single glance, and libraries in a courtesy; or, by omitting either, can "Kill, kill, kill, kill," as ruthlessly as Lear.

When the Cabinet Ministress makes her appearance at Court to perform her official ko-too, the aspect of royalty is watched by all present, to ascertain the temperature of her welcome; and, according as that august countenance freezes or thaws, those of the titled mob are bright or sinister. The stability of the administration is opined upon, according to the indications of the barometer of that variable atmosphere, the breath of Kings.

The Cabinet Ministress is invited to share the bread and salt of the royal table; and those who know not what duplicity is in Courts, predict that all must be safe; or she is coldly looked upon, and not a civil syllable is uttered of inquiry after her sick

children or gouty father ; and people go and sell out of the stocks, not dreaming how many masks are assumed to lead astray the surmises of political antagonism.

Another of the *peines fortes et dures* sustained by Cabinet Ministresses, is that of doing the honours of the country to illustrious foreigners, not quite grand enough to be inmates of the palace, and too grand to be the guests of the commonalty.

These great unknowns, usually speaking no language but their own, must be chaperoned to St. Paul's, the Abbey, the Tower, like other country cousins ; they must be escorted to the Opera, accompanied to Almack's, presented at Court. No matter whether the august visitor, flung with other burthens on the shoulders of the Foreign Office, be the Duchess of Hesse Holburg Fiddelhausen, or Quam Sham Heblez Fudgeroo, Princess Royal of the Sandwich Islands, Lady Downing Street must take care that her Royal or Serene Highness's sauerkraut, or sandwich of raw veal, is suitably adjusted ; that her Royal or Serene Highness's court plume, or jacket

of peacock's feathers, come home in due time from the plumassier; and should her Royal or Serene Highness be summoned to Bow Street, for fustigating her maids of honour, or carbonadoing a child for luncheon, the Cabinet Ministress is required to explain to her that she is in the wrong box, and that nothing enormous can be done in England without "an order from the magistrates."

The Cabinet-Ministress must possess a half-horse, half-alligator constitution. She must be ready to rattle in twenty minutes to Windsor—hail, rain, or shine,—whether on the eve of her confinement, or just recovering from the same,—whenever honoured with a summons to eat a slice of the royal venison, or take up a stitch in the royal *soutache*. She must be insensible to the perils and dangers of damp beds or smoky chimneys, when following the Court; and, should the Pavilion be the favourite toy of the reign, must on no account find the searching air of Brighton too keen. Its rough visiting, like that of custom-house officers on landing from

France, is a sacrifice due to the interests of Government.

Her appetite must be as sturdy as her limbs. However squeamish by nature, she must be ready to swallow turtle and venison *à discrétion*, whenever invited to figure at public dinners. "The Cabinet Ministers and their ladies" are required to be in readiness whenever the City of London feasts the City of Westminster, cramming its aldermen and custards down the throats of the dainty dames of May Fair. Wherever new bridges, railroads, or docks are opened to the public, hundred-and-twenty gun ships launched, statues inaugurated, or other grand national events solemnized with eating and drinking, the Cabinet Ministress must hob and nob with the local authorities, in order to have it supposed by the rest of the world that Government has had a finger in the pie.

If a tall showy woman, doing honour to her vocation, ten to one but the Cabinet Ministress will be asked to lay the first stone of a church, bridge, arch, college, lunatic asylum, or other national monu-

ment,—or to christen the ship with a bottle of pale sherry,—or hazard her life by being the first to skim along the new railroad, or by supporting, for three consecutive hours, the weighty politeness of the Lord Mayor.

But all this she must endure with smiling amenity. Whatever solemnities may take place during her husband's administration—whether the thermometer be three degrees below freezing point, or at ninety-two in the shade,—she must be able to stand half-a-dozen hours on a chilly pavement without a sneeze, or in the broiling sunshine without fainting or a *coup de soleil*. A parasol, fleecy hosiery, and the inborn strength of a Cabinet Ministress, will get her through her miseries. A bilious fever, caught at the Mansion House, would be an insult to the chief magistrate of the City of London; and, were she to complain of a fit of the rheumatism, as the result of some royal funeral or banquet in a barge, the attention of Parliament might, perhaps, be called to her delinquency by some factious Opposition Member.

But it is not alone to the festivals of the Home Department poor Lady Downing Street

is required to do justice. Besides eating slices of a raw baron of beef in the Egyptian Hall, or an unctuous matelotte of eels, that look like segments of a boa constrictor, swan-hopping at Eel-pie island, the Cabinet Ministress is expected to assist in the celebration of all the birthdays of all the sovereigns in Europe—from the youthful Queen of the Peninsula, to the undying one, the veteran King of Sweden. She must not only have the almanack of Saxe Gotha at her fingers' ends, but be prepared to munch her way through it, as a promising child eats through its gingerbread alphabet. She must imbibe furlongs of maccaroni with the Ambassador of the Two Sicilies on the 12th of January; and swallow six ounces of caviar without wincing, with their Muscovite Excellencies on the 6th of July; nay, now that all Mussulman prejudices are abolished, it is probable that she may hereafter have to pull a pillau to pieces with her fingers at the Ottoman Embassy, or sup on "treacle, green figs, and garlic," with the representative of the Nawaub of Oude.

All this is very well, (*i. e.*, if it do not

make her very ill) for these are duties of routine common to her predecessors, destined to her successors, and to be learned by questioning the very stones of the pavement of Downing Street. The grand difficulty of her vocation consists in a case of emergency ; such as when the wife of the abdicated editor of the *Comet* or *Times*, or some other "leading journal which has lent its powerful aid to Government," is to be presented at Court, and the Cabinet Ministresses begin to shift the disagreeable duty from one to another. Or when there is a split in the royal family, and those favoured by the King are expected to be ungracious to the Queen ; or those petted by the Queen required to be disrespectful towards some other member of the royal family. Nothing so difficult as to hit the exact medium due to the exigencies of royal taskmasters or mistresses. There must not be a scruple too much of bitterness or conscience, lest party newspapers take up the defence of the injured party. If the Sovereign turn his or her back upon certain individuals, the Cabinet

Minister or Ministress may just glance at them over one shoulder. If the Sovereign refuse them an audience, the Cabinet Minister or Ministress, must receive them standing. But if the Sovereign expressly direct that their memorials, letters, or other molestations, be left unanswered, the Cabinet Minister or Ministress may ignore their existence altogether for the remainder of their natural lives.

All this, and a great deal more, is duly impressed upon the mind of the Cabinet Ministress, from the moment her husband takes office. She is taught her lesson, as a bulfinch is taught to pipe; and nothing can be more curious than the occasional breaking forth of her natural notes, when her little official song escapes her memory; or the skill with which she falls back again into "Marlbrook," or the "Duke of York's March," when she finds herself growing too natural. Her voice has a tone in talking about Ireland, the Corn-Laws, and other delicate questions, which could only have been instilled by a bird fancier.

Cabinet Ministresses, like captains, are

casual things. The virulence of certain Tory Countesses, whenever they have an opportunity of giving tongue, is a proof how irritating are the effects of a fall from their high official estate, which, like other perils, leaves them, if not with broken bones, at least floundering in the mud.

We all know what a foolish-looking thing was the gilt grasshopper—to which we had looked up with reverence so long as it glittered at the top of the Royal Exchange,—when, brought down to the level of the earth, it lay, with other rubbish, in a tinman's yard. So is it with the Cabinet Ministresses, who, during the ascendancy of their party, were painted by the presidents of the Royal Academy; engraved by Doo, or Cousins; made frontispieces to annuals; sung by the Countess of Blessington, or some other fashionable laureate; and humbly implored to give their names and subscriptions to all the new works, all the new charities, all the new institutions,—to patronize charity balls or breakfasts in favour of asylums for every disease having a bustling Esculapius to maintain its importance, and be maintained by it in re-

turn ;—to attest the virtues of the American soothing syrup, and the interesting object of “ a case of extreme distress,” at the risk of having a vote of censure passed upon their credulity by the College of Physicians, and the Mendicity Society.

After enjoying all this onerous popularity, —after being invited for the holidays to the best villas, and made to sink under a weight of tokens of fashionable regard,—the wresting the seals of office from the hands of their lords and masters, (or slaves) has sealed their destiny !—They have become nothing, and *ex nihilo nihil fit*.—People who used to besiege their doors with visits, send cards of condolence by their footmen ; and, the following season, forget to send them at all.

If they have formerly figured as beauties, the fickle voice of fashion now proclaims that they are “ pretty, certainly, but silly, and vacant looking ;” or if, when in office, applauded as wits, they are now discovered to be “ ugly beyond permission,” or “ peevish as a sick parrot.” From the day of vacating their place in Downing

Street, their feet and hands grow large, their eyes and understandings small; and, both figuratively and materially, they lose a cubit of their stature.

And of all these miseries, the Cabinet Ministress is kept in hourly apprehension by the threats of the opposition journals, and the utter dependence of her spouse upon the breath of Kings, and buffetings of Parliament!—Like the senior captain of a marching regiment, she lives only in the hope of “getting the majority.” At the political rubber, she remembers only the cards that are *out*, and trembles for the odd trick which is to secure her game. To *her*, life is a speculation. There are always odds for, or against her being something or nothing, that day six months; and, as a Cabinet Ministress is sure to have a host of indigent nephews or cousins to provide for, she grows feverishly anxious concerning divisions and adjournments.

While protesting that she is sick to death of the cares of place, and that all she wants is to get down to her country seat, instead of being fogged into an ague in London in

the month of November, (when nothing is open in town but the patent theatres, and catacombs of the national cemetery,) she is, in fact, trembling lest she should have to pack her traps and be off.

If turned out, she knows that, like other ejected animals, she shall receive a kick from every one at parting ; or, if required to bid "farewell, a long farewell to all her greatness," by the demise of her right honourable lord, feels that she shall be required to eat thrice as much dirt as other dowagers ;—that the country will always be flinging in her teeth the pension which is to enable her to put something between them ;—and, should she incline to second wedlock, let her remember the abuse heaped on Mrs. Perceval, and tremble !—Even though knocked off her pedestal, she must evermore deport herself as if still figuring thereon.

Such are the trying destinies of the Cabinet Ministress.

THE LINKMAN.

WE are told that there is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous. It may be observed, with equal truth, that between the mobs of the great world and the swell mob there is only a LINK! A Linkman is, *bona fide*, the beggar defined by Hamlet, as “galling the courtier’s kibe;” —a moral parody on the lady’s page of the days of chivalry;—in spite of his rags, the only favoured mortal permitted to approach so near the Lady Dulcibella as she steps into her carriage after a ball, that his begrimed face and tattered garments are fanned by the fragrant breath and oriental perfumes of the court-beauty.

Like the heralds of old, the Linkman is a privileged person. Nay, he enjoys higher

privileges than even the herald, whose office consisted in bearing the words of others, while the Linkman is allowed to give utterance to sentiments wholly his own. A court-jester or my Lord Mayor's fool is scarcely more sanctioned in the freedom of speech which tramples on all distinctions of rank and station, than the professional Link.

The Linkman may, in fact, be considered the public orator of the kennel. His knowledge of the men and manners that be, amounts almost to omniscience ; and, saving Lord Brougham, there scarcely exists a man, in private or official life, who excels him in the manly frankness of telling people truths to their faces.

Not a dandy of Crockford's, — not a dowager of Grosvenor Square—whose name is not familiar in the mouth of the Linkman as household words ;—so much so, that he uses them as cavalierly as his goods and chattels, by superadding cognomens more appropriate than acceptable to the owners. Posterity might obtain considerable insight into the characters of many whom the

Herald's Office styles "illustrious," and history is preparing to call "great," were it to employ reporters to stenograph, during a single evening, the ex-official debates among the henchmen of the flambeau at the door of the House of Commons, the Opera, and Almacks. The Linkmen of the day, or night, would throw considerable light upon the subject.

Unlike other popular representatives, the Linkman sees with unbiassed eyes, and declaims with unblushing enunciation. The Linkman is never inaudible in the gallery. He is not only initiated into the secrets of the prison-house per privilege of place, as auditor of the last few words drawled between the Premier and the Home Secretary, as they separate at the door of their parliamentary den ; or the few last whispers interchanged between the young Duchess and the idol of her soul, as he hands her into her chariot, after a third waltz at some fête in Berkeley Square ; but he has not the slightest motive for rounding their periods or qualifying their expressions, after the fashion of the char-

tered fabricators of parliamentary eloquence or fashionable intelligence.

The Linkman nothing extenuates, and sets down nought in malice.

“The old chap told the Markis that for all his palaver, the Irish question was all my eye!”—is *his* literal interpretation of a ministerial colloquy;—and “The Capp’n swore to my lady as ’ow her eyes ’ad pitched it into ’im strong,”—is his equally faithful transcript of a declaration of love couched in the flowery generalities of Lalla Rookh or the Life Guards. The Linkman is consequently an accusing angel, who inscribes in his black book all the aristocratic indiscretions of the season.

What a singular destiny!—A very slight stretch of imagination might transform the ragged caitiff stationed with his link at the gates of some lordly palace, into a Spirit stationed with his flaming sword at the gates of Paradise! Celestial odours exhale upon him from those open portals. The music of a heavenly choir resounds in faint echoes from the distance. Emanations of ambrosial food deride his lips. He hears the

flageolet of Collinet,—he savours the garnished chickens of Gunter,—he beholds the tripsome feet of Lady Wilhelmine or Lady Clementina flit by him ;—and lo ! he returns to the gnawing of his mutton bone and the twanging of his Jew's harp,—mocked by a Barmecide's feast of the imagination.

So far, however, from complaining of his destinies, he feels that it is something to have enjoyed even this “bare imagination of a feast ;”—something to have fed on the crumbs falling from the table of beauty ;—something to have been sanctified by a touch from the hem of the garments of those superhuman creatures. His brethren of the puddle are divided by a vast abyss from such angelic company. It is only the filthy torch he carries in his hand that entitles him to accost the shrinking beauty with, “Take your time, my lady !—please to take your time !—Only your ladyship's poor linkman ! Rainy night, my lady ; may I ask the servant for sixpence ?”—so disposing his link during his apostrophe, that he is enabled to decide whether my

lady's silken hose are laced or plain ; and whether her ladyship's white slippers be of silk or satin !—Not one of her adorers have approached her more familiarly in the course of the evening, than “ her ladyship's poor linkman !”

It is astonishing the tact evinced by these fellows in ferreting out everything in the shape of an entertainment, from Pimlico to Whitechapel. Provided half a dozen carriages and hack cabs be gathered together, thither crowd the linkmen ;—varying their apostrophes from “ Take your time, my lady,” to “ Take your time, Mrs. Smith !” or “ Shall I call up your lordship's people ?” to “ Please to want a cab, Sir ?”

At the more brilliant balls, they are as inevitable as the *cornet à piston* of Koenig ! One knows them like the cuckoo, by “ their most sweet voices,” rather than by their outward presentment, albeit revealed to view by the flaring of their links, as the ugliness of the imps of darkness in Don Juan, by the flashing of their torches.

These “ winged voices,” these

Airy tongues that syllable men's names,

connect themselves as intimately with the gaieties of Almacks' as if the Linkman held his patent of office from the Patroness's Bench. There is a peculiar hoarseness in their accents, as if the larynx, harassed by an eternal calling of carriages, had imbibed some mysterious distemper. They speak as through a speaking-trumpet; or like Demosthenes, trying to outroar the surges of the chafing ocean!

Much discussion has arisen of late years concerning the origin of the slang phrases of the day; and marvellous, indeed, is the universality of these axioms of street eloquence. But a common place cannot always have been a common place; and to *originate* a common place, is an effort of creative genius. The first man who said, "Does your mother know you're out?" uttered that which has been repeated by an enlightened population of at least a million of souls. If not witty himself, he has been the cause of wit in others, by inducing many an apt appropriation of a platitude.

Some assert that these cant words and slang phrases have their origin in the police

reports ; others that they spring to light and life in the galleries of the minor theatres. The truth is, that they are the legitimate and indisputable offspring of the Linkmen of the West End ! Ask the policemen. Inquire of the standard footmen,—and they will inform you, that the first time they were ever pestered with interrogations concerning their mamma's mangle and pianoforte, was by the Linkmen attending some fashionable assembly.

A few minutes' attention to their notes explanatory and commentatorial upon the carriages, as they successively drive up to a door, would suffice to prove their humour worthy the illustration of Cruikshank or Leech. A few years ago, when the Church, if not in danger, was in disgrace with the street orators of the metropolis, it was a favourite jest with the Linkmen to go bawling round the Opera House, in the thick of the crush of carriages after the opera, every Sunday morning,—“ The Archbishop of Canterbury's carriage ! ”—“ The Bishop of London's carriage stops the way ! ”—“ The Bishop of Exeter coming out ! ”—thereby impressing

the multitude with a firm conviction of the levity, if not demoralization, of those eminent prelates. At the time of the Reform Bill, their vocabilities had a still more personal tendency; and to this day, all the biting truths inflicted upon the French ministers by the Charivari, are lavished *viva voce* on our English legislators, by the sarcasms of the linkboys.

In former times, before London was paved and lighted as becomes a civilized metropolis, every footman was his own linkman. The lackeys clustered behind a nobleman's carriage, or escorting a lady's sedan, carried each his torch, like pages on the stage in the old plays. Beside the entrance of many of the old-fashioned mansions in London may still be seen appended a huge iron funnel for extinguishing the flambeau or link.

But since the introduction of gas, the Linkman's "occupation's gone," as regards the livery of London. The flambeau is in desuetude; the link has retrograded to St. Giles's; nay, it now simply constitutes a badge to distinguish from the common herd

the privileged callers-up of carriages. The noisy, officious, troublesome, roaring, boring rascallions, who visit the pavement wherever a goodly mansion is lighted up for the reception of company, would be severally consigned to the station-house and Penitentiary as disturbers of the public peace, did they not bear in their hands an ensign of impunity. As the herald was protected by his wand—as the Chancellor by his mace—as the Archbishop by his crosier—as Majesty itself is dignified by the sceptre,—the interjectional portion of the mobility who call the coaches of the nobility, are sanctified by their links ;—thereby entitled to vex the dull ear of night with their

Linked sweetness long drawn out.

The Linkmen of London are usually natives of the sister island,—which implies that they are poor, lean, hungerly, brisk, and knowing ;—*Pat* at giving or taking offence. A jest-book might be concocted from their well-known repartees ; and a series of romances compiled from the indited memoirs of these enlightening mem-

bers of society. Dodsley, the man of letters, began life as a footman. I dare not say how high certain of our contemporaries have risen, who commenced as linkboys.—Let a single instance suffice.

Some five-and-thirty years ago,

In my hot youth, when George the Third was king,

there came, among other specimens of Irish starvation, from the Cove of Cork, the skeleton of a dapper-limbed young fellow, who, after fighting the king of terrors in the guise of typhus fever, famine, and Ballinasloe fair, had a mind to see whether the living which he found it impossible to pick up on Irish ground, were to be found, on any terms, in the kingdom of Cockaigne.

While bog-trotting and turf-cutting in his hungry boyhood, he had heard wondrous fairy tales of the city whose streets are paved with gold, whose houses are tiled with pancakes, and whose geese fly about ready stuffed, cackling for the spit and dying to be roasted; and was exceedingly disappointed when he arrived by long sea in the river, with a cargo of Irish butter, Irish

pork, and Irish labourers, to find that people must work for their living in London, as elsewhere ; but that work was not always to be had.

With a heavy heart did the new-comer seat himself on the stones of old London Bridge. In the desolation of his soul, he wept bitterly. He had not where to lay his head that night ; and but for the opportune suggestion of some better impulse, such as that which instigated Whittington to " turn again " from the milestone, and aspire to the civic chair of London, Corney Cregan would perhaps have sought rest in the bed of the river that ran below. Hope whispered to him that in a capital glittering with such myriads of lights, and rumbling with such thousands of equipages, a brighter fate must be in store for him than amid the toiling moiling drudgery of his own poor gloomy native land.

Even the ardent temperament of an Irishman, however, all but gave way under the influence of a week's starvation and a week's mockery,—the isolation of an alien in a land of strangers !—The skeleton be-

came still more gaunt, and its brilliant eyes burnt brighter in their sockets, under the excitement of want and desperation. From his youth upward, nothing had ever prospered with Corney. The cherry-trees from which he had been posted to drive away the birds, were sure to be more pecked than other cherry-trees. The field he was employed to sow, produced the scantiest crops ; the hay he was employed to mow, was never known to dry.

And now, the same evil destiny seemed to pursue him in his new settlement ! If he asked for employment, his shabby appearance was scouted ; if he asked for charity, he was rebuked as too well dressed for a beggar ; nay, when he attempted to pour his tale of woe into the ears of “ the humane, whom Heaven hath blessed with affluence,” as the advertisements have it, the richness of his brogue had so powerful an effect upon his auditors, that they were sure to wipe from their eyes tears arising from laughter rather than from emotions of sympathy.

Poor Corney's heart was ready to break.

All this was worse than starving in Ireland. In Ireland people are *used* to starve, till like the eels, they think nothing of it !

But to starve in goodly streets abounding in cooks' shops, amid men and women who looked as if fed to compete for Smithfield prizes, was a realization of the pains of Tantalus ! As he passed by the areas of the fashionable squares, and imbibed the aroma of stews and ragoûts issuing from the offices, it was not wonderful that he should conceive some mistrust concerning the text which talks of "filling the hungry with good things, and sending the rich empty away."

One summer afternoon, about the time when London sends forth its brightest equipages, adorned with the brightest human faces, to disport in the brightest sunshine of Hyde Park, poor Corney tottered his way from the miserable cellar in St. Giles's where he rented a bed at the price of two-pence a night and the succeeding day's worth of rheumatism, towards the fashionable quarter of the town,—leaning against the railings, the better to support his

exhausted frame, and feeling that, if hunger could eat through stone walls, it was a shame that Providence sent him only brick ones to devour.

The strong man was now a weakling,—the cheerful one a misanthrope. Vainly had he addressed himself to the fair inmates of more than one showy carriage for the sorry dole of a halfpenny. Though something in the picturesque wildness of his appearance for a moment captivated their attention, no sooner did his extended hand convince them that he was in need of charity, than they became shocked and frightened — muttered something about “wild Irishman,” or “horrid Irishman,”—and desired the laced footmen in attendance to drive him away.

“Sorrow take ’em then, for hearts as black as the faces iv ’em is fair!”—was the only ejaculation of poor Corney as he turned doggedly away; and lo! when he applied in the same pitiful terms to passers-by of his own sex, he found himself threatened with the Mendicity Society, or affronted by mention of a constable. If

the poor man had only had strength to be indignant, he would have fired up at the insults put upon his country in his person.

Sauntering onward and onward, with a vague hope, proceeding from the increasing purity of the atmosphere, that he should reach green fields and blue skies at last, Corney traversed the brilliant tumults of Bond Street, crossed Berkeley Square, and at length took refuge on the doorstep of a handsome house in a street somewhat more secluded than the rest.

Though it was Seamore Place, poor Corney Cregan knew not that only a row of houses divided him from the pleasant pastures of Hyde Park. Resting his head upon his hands to relieve the dizziness arising from weakness and want, he began to indulge in visions of a brighter kind; soothing his pangs in England by hopes of heaven,—just as in old Ireland he had assuaged them by hopes of England, prosperity, and peace. In the extremity of his woe, he still pursued the instincts of a sanguine nature, and looked forward.

He was roused from his reverie by the

approach of a horse entering the quiet street. All Irishmen are born with a weakness for horseflesh. Miserable as he was, he could not look without a feeling of satisfaction at the fine animal and its handsome young rider, so well-fitted for each other, who appeared before him,

A stately apparition sent
To be a moment's ornament,

to the barren waste of his prospects. Starting up, poor Corney fixed his eyes upon them with such beaming and undisguised admiration, that something of the poetry of enthusiasm imparting itself to his gaunt person, attracted in its turn the notice of the young equestrian.

He was in the act of dismounting to pay a visit in the very house upon whose doorstep Corney had been resting.

"Can I trust you to hold my horse?" said he, addressing the poor fellow; who forthwith uttered in such uncouth accents his promise to have a care of the "baste as though 't were his own," as might have intimidated a less confiding nature, lest he

should so far treat it as his own as to ride off with it, and be heard of no more.

The young man, however, who was also a young gentleman, and an officer in the Life Guards, possessed a sufficient insight into the mysteries of human physiognomy to intrust his property to the hands of Corney Cregan. After a word or two of instruction as to the mouth of the horse and the mode of holding the bridle, Captain Wrottesley entered the house, after declining the civil offer of one of the servants by whom the door was opened to officiate as his groom during his visit.

The first ten minutes were very long to Corney; for his mind was intent upon the few pence which he expected as the guerdon of his office. But by the time a quarter of an hour had elapsed, he was beginning to feel an interest in the fine animal under his charge; and when, at the close of an hour, Captain Wrottesley reappeared, his poor heart was actually cheered by such intimate companionship with a beast so much more cared for, and so much better fed than himself.

The young soldier, on the other hand, was pleased to find that, instead of his horse being harassed, as is so often the case when intrusted to the care of some casual guardian, his orders had been strictly attended to. His visit had been a delightful one. His own spirit was as much the lighter for it, as Corney's ; so that, instead of the shilling wherewith it was his custom to repay an hour's attendance, he bestowed a whole half-crown upon his tattered esquire.

Little did he suspect the opulence contained in that single coin, to the imagination of Corney Cregan ! Within another hour, he had appeased the gnawing pangs of hunger, and taken out of pawn the jacket which had obtained him a shilling to keep him from starving the preceding week. That night, he slept like an Emperor !

The following day, about the same hour, but more from the desire to renew an agreeable reminiscence than from any expectation of encountering his benefactor again, Corney rambled to the same spot. Judge of his delight when, as he entered the

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secluded street, he saw the "iligant baste of a chisnut horse, and his darlin' of a rider," entering it at the further extremity ; and to his utter amazement, found his services again in request. The handsome young officer and his Bucephalus seemed expressly sent by Providence as a blessing upon poor Corney !—

" Harkye, my good fellow !" said Captain Wrottesley, at the close of his second visit, " you seem to be out of work, and living hereabouts. If you choose to try your luck every day at this hour, most likely I shall find you employment. I can't afford to give you half-crowns every day. A shilling is my stint for such jobs, and a shilling you shall have. Be here to-morrow. So long as I find I can rely upon you, you may rely upon me."

No need to record the countless benedictions lavished by poor Corney in the exuberance of his gratitude, upon Providence, the young officer, and the chesnut horse ! It was as much as he could do to preserve a decent sobriety of deportment on his way home to St. Giles's ; and when a week's

official life had enabled him to lay by a sufficient sum, he felt it due to Captain Wrottesley to change his sleeping quarters to a mews in May Fair, in order to realize his patron's opinion that he was a denizen of the neighbourhood of Seamore Place.

It so happened that the daily visits which brought so bright a flush to the cheeks of the young guardsman, and imparted such brilliant vivacity to his eyes, were addressed to one with whose servants he was not willing to place his own groom in communication. It suited him to ride thither unattended ; and it was consequently satisfactory to him to have secured a trustworthy fellow to take charge of his favourite horse during the happy lapse of time he was devoting to one still dearer to his affections.

Week after week, were the services of Corney retained. Already, he was becoming attached to his employer. There was something so fascinating in the open countenance of young Wrottesley, that Cregan would willingly have served him for nothing, had it been needful.

But the captain seemed to take as much pleasure in paying, as the poor Irishman in being paid. The shilling thrown to Corney was but a trifling token of the joy thrilling in the young man's heart as he issued from those doors, in peace and charity with all the world,—grateful to the enchanting friend he had left,—grateful to the sun for shining on him,—grateful to the noble horse he was about to ride,—grateful even to the poor ragged fellow who had taken such good care of it during his absence.

By degrees, the ragged henchman assumed a more respectable appearance. In a ticket-porter's scarlet waistcoat and sleeves, he tried to appear more deserving the service of him who risked his property in his hands. Wrottesley, on the other hand, took pride in his protégé's well-doing. In the course of three months' daily intercommunication, he had become so much interested in Corney's prospects, and so much touched by the gratitude of the warm-hearted fellow, as to recommend his services to his brother officers.

Thenceforward, Corney became the mes-

senger of the Guards, as Mercury of the gods : and, as a quaint mythologist has asserted that Hermes is represented with wings to his cap, as a token that the hat of a lackey ought to fly off to all mankind, the Irish peasant became courteous and humble in proportion as he rose in the world.

He was applauded for his civility almost as much as for his probity and address. Corney Cregan was pronounced to be a fellow whom anybody might trust with anything, and who might be trusted to deliver anything to anybody. He *could* not give offence. All the morning he held horses at the door of Captain Wrottesley's club, or went confidential errands, or carried parcels of trust ;—at once the lightest light porter in St. James's Street, and the lightest hearted fellow in Great Britain !

As Corney became a man of substance, following the adage that “ it is a poor heart that never rejoices,” he allowed himself a little pleasure in addition to his multiplicity of toils. Addicted to theatrical amusements, he often favoured himself with a

half-price entrance into the gallery, which enables a certain portion of the public to enjoy a view and hearing of the play, such as might be enjoyed out of a balloon. But if it scarcely enabled Corney to obtain much insight into what was passing on the stage, it introduced him to the acquaintance, at the doors of the theatre, of that worshipful confraternity, the Linkocracy of the London world. They were his countrymen, although he knew them not ; and, after a due process of eating and drinking, swearing and singing, in their society, Corney Cregan was eventually induced to enlist in their regiment.—He purchased his first link, and became one of the Illuminati of the western world ! .

On this occasion, the high patronage enjoyed by the poor Irishman proved of material service to him. The first time Corney officiated at Almacks', he obtained so much custom from his old patrons, and such civil notice from old Townsend, to whom they recommended him, that he was accounted among his Luciferian brethren as their grand link with the nobility of the

realm. The dandies of the day knew him by name, as well as sight ; and Juliet was a ninny to inquire " What's in a name ?"—or rather, Romeo was a blockhead not to reply, "*Everything !*"

" Corney, I want my carriage !" " Corney, call my cab !" " Corney, fetch my fellow !" " Corney, a coach !" distinguished the popular Linkman above his fellows. In vain did the more officious interpose at play of opera ; " No—no !—I want Corney Cregan !"—was all the reply vouchsafed to their envious interference.

Corney was now at the top of his profession ; Corney had put money in his purse ; Corney was a man well to do in the world. It came to be known among the *roués* that Corney had always a five-pound note or two, in his pocket-book, at the Fives-Court, or Epsom, or Ascot, to lend to a customer whose funds might run short ; and such little obligations were sure to be handsomely acknowledged on payment of the debt.

Let it not be inferred that our Linkman was guilty of usurious practices. So far from

it, that he is recorded to have been as mild and gentlemanly a creditor, as Duval a highwayman. But his amiable forbearance brought its own reward. "Here are a couple of guineas for you, Corney, because you did not plague me!" was by no means an uncommon mode of doing business with the only banker who ever made light of an obligation.

Amid all this flush of prosperity, Cregan considered it his duty to posterity to take a wife. He even asked the opinion and advice of Captain Wrottesley on the subject, —a week after he had become the happy husband of little Katty O'Callaghan.

But if somewhat late in the day for the captain's counsels to be useful, his assistance was not wanting to the poor fellow to whose fortunes his notice had been so providential. Being intimately acquainted with the kind-hearted man, at that period lessee of the King's Theatre, the young patron obtained for Corney the situation of porter to the Opera; and thenceforward, the eyes of Katty and admiring London saluted Mr. Cregan arrayed in a handsome dark blue

livery, and a dignity of deportment suitable to so responsible an office.

“ Bless your kind heart, Captain Wrottesley, sir !”—said he, addressing his patron at the close of his first season, “ only till me how I can sarve ye !—I ben’t proud, sir !—Order me as ye plase. For *you*, sir, I shall always be Corney Cragan !”—

Under these happy auspices were a little Katty and a little Corney born to the thriving couple. Corney had his salary and his quarter-day, like other Ministers of State. But unluckily, like other Ministers of State, he ran the hazard of a downfall. Managers, like captains, are casual things. The Opera was more brilliant than ever ; the theatre constantly crammed ; and the result was, the Gazette and Basinghall Street for the first Lord of its Treasury, and loss of office to one whose letters were now occasionally directed, Cornelius Cregan, Esq.

There was nothing left for it but to give up the cottage at Hampstead, pigstye, strawberry-bed and all, and re-enter the modest ranks of private life. Cornelius gazed wistfully upon the miniature Katty

and Corney adorning his fireside, and, with a spirit of magnanimity worthy of Coriolanus, became Corney again. It was as though Louis Philippe were to secede from the throne of France, and become once more Duke of Orleans for the benefit of his interesting family!

It was a trying moment—the first night on which Corney took his station once more among his quondam confraternity, his humble link in hand!—Flesh is frail. Linkmen, though enlightened men, are but mortals; and it must be admitted that certain among them, jealous of his recent dignities, wagged their heads, saying, “This our brother, who exalted himself, being abased, is come to take the bread from our mouths, and the mouths of our children!”

It was not till he had made them fully understand that he was a ruined man,—a beggar like themselves,—one who, like Dogberry, had “had losses,”—his whole amount of savings having been invested in the hazardous speculation which engulfed his place and his profits,—that they for-

gave him his elevation, and forgave him his downfall,—welcoming him cordially again to the world of flambeaux.

Such is the history of Corney Cregan,—the tulip of links,—who may be regarded as the Doctor Johnson of the vernacular of slang. Corney is now a veteran. He can no longer call a coach in the brilliant and original style that was wont to excite the plaudits of the stand, when Hughes Ball was a dandy, and Brummell a wit. He is considered, however, the father of the links. His testimony has been more than once invoked in perplexing cases by the sitting magistrates, as the most trustworthy witness in cases of carriage-breaking, or footman-slaying, amid the crush of fashionable fêtes. For Corney is known to be a man of honour,—the Bayard of the kennel, as well as its admirable Crichton.

Astonishing is the reverence shown him by the rising generation. Whenever a linkboy picks up a diamond cross in the mud, or receives a sovereign in place of a shilling from some reeling swell, it is in the hands of Corney Cregan the treasure is de-

posited till the question of property can be established. Corney is king of the elective monarchy of Links. Though not pensioned as an ex-porter, like others as ex-chancellors, he retains out of place almost all the consideration he enjoyed in his dark-blue livery.

There is something imposing in his bassoon-like tones when gratuitously vociferating such names as those of the "Duke of Wellington," or the "Countess of Jersey," when their footmen are missing at some gay entertainment. The intonation of Corney has a character as classically distinct from that of inferior links, as the enunciation of Kemble from that of the romantic schools of modern tragedians. For Corney is the noblest Roman of them all, as well as a link of some value in the chain of modern enlightenment.

THE STANDARD FOOTMAN.

No one foresaw the future author of Macbeth, in little Will Shakspeare, the wool comber. No one surmised Sir Isaac Newton, in the cunning little Isaac, chary of his tops and marbles. But, in the gaunt lanky footboy of twelve shooting up, like a bean-stalk in the fairy tale, in spite of the wants and miseries that ought to keep him flat and compact, many a starving mother of the lower classes foresees a STANDARD FOOTMAN!

The standard footman is the man of genius of humble life, where the only *esprit* recognised is *l'esprit du corps*. The standard footman is the Lovelace of the kennel,—the Rochester of the area-gate. If the link-boy afford a striking burlesque of the Page of chivalry, the standard footman is

its esquire ;—a parody on the beau of old comedy, the Lord Foppington of the stage.

He is, in fact, the only *Marquis* (as a *Marquis* was painted by Molière), extant in Great Britain. The standard footman has “a livery more guarded than his fellows.” His wages, which he calls a salary, double theirs. Yet he is as infallibly in debt as invariably in love ; deep in the books of his laundress,—deep in the affections of the linen-draper’s daughter, who would feign disgrace her family, and descend from the dignities of the counter to become his wife. “For bless you !” as her neighbours say, “what can she be a-thinking on ?—Richard ben’t by no means a marrying man !”—

The only falling off, by the way, in the vocation of the standard footman, is this same Richardism. In France, in the days of magnificence, when palaces were constructed like Versailles, tragedies like *Bajazet*, and comedies like the *Tartuffe*, great people had ant-hills of lackeys in their households, who clung behind their coaches and six, on gala days, and ran errands in the absence of that modern locomotive conveniency, the post.

But in those grandiose times, aristocratic mouths disdained to pronounce familiarly the vulgar appellations bestowed by god-fathers and godmothers, at the baptismal font.

When a man's name was John, they call'd him, not "Richard," but "Frontin." Their lackeys were their hereditary vassals. Their lackeys, who were of the earth, earthy—a mere part and parcel of the clay of their estates, were named instead of Tom or Harry, "Champagne," "Lorrain," "Picard," according to their province; or Jasmin, or La Fleur, according to their valet de chambrehood.

There was vast magniloquence in this.—"York, you're wanted!" or, "send Gloucester or Dorset to me," would certainly have a grander sound than "I rang for John." "Call Northumberland!" carries with it a Shakspearian twang; and never more so, than if applied to a stalwart, well-drilled, standard footman.

Premising, however, that for the present these esquires of the aristocratic body are

still called Robert or Richard, ("two pretty men,") it may be observed that the man born for the honours of a chariot in Grosvenor Square, is fated to begin a life of servitude with gloomy prospects. The standard footman is sure to have been in his time an overgrown, lanky boy,—a diminutive sign-post or clothes horse, with the action of a telegraph, or Irish member. No chance for *him* of the boudoir education of pagehood. At fourteen, he is a great awkward hulk, with uncouth limbs and features, whose only hope of preferment is by enlisting in the household brigade. But his awkwardness and uncouthness are that of a scaffolding promising the standard footman hereafter.

Even such a scaffolding was Tom Scroggs; one of seven sturdy little savages abiding in the cottage of Thomas Scroggs the elder, a locksmith on the Paddington canal, domiciled in one of the squalid hovels on Boxmoor, ere Boxmoor became a land of railroads. The mother was a straw-plaiter, according to the custom of the county of Herts; and her children, as soon as their

little fingers could move, were taught to fidget between them the coarse rushes of the moor, as a preliminary to the fair and glossy straws which, at some future time, were to be enwoven by them for the Dunstable market.

All was plaiting in the hovel. The children seemed born neat-fingered and adroit. As the spinners of Hindostan possess a peculiar organization of the finger tips, enabling them to draw out the filmy threads that constitute the beauty of India muslin, the Hertfordshire children possess an hereditary instinct for the manual jerk which accomplishes a first-rate straw-plaiter.

Tom, however, the second boy, was an exception. Tom rebelled against this sedentary employment. Tom had a soul above straws. At twelve years old, he was a Patagonian, towering above his brothers and sisters, and threatening some danger to the bare rafters of his low-browed dwelling ; the cobwebs pendent whereunto being fanned hither and thither as he traversed the clay-floored chamber, "which served them for kitchen, for parlour, and all."

It is a charming theme for elegiac poets to versify upon the union of poverty and content. Let them only try it for a year or two!—Let them observe face to face the contentment of the poor. Sickness and need are peevish visitations ; and Thomas Scroggs and Martha Scroggs were accordingly as cross a pair of parents as any Earl or Countess in Grosvenor Square, harassed by sons who choose to marry to please themselves, and daughters who do not please to marry at all. The mother was a scold, the father a brute ; and Mr. and Mrs. Scroggs cuffed their offspring *ad libitum*, whenever they wanted courage to scold and cuff each other ; or perhaps for the sake of variety. For their life was not chequered with much pastime. They had no plays or operas to resort to for diversion ; and, under such circumstances, a domestic row constitutes an agreeable excitement.

Tom, however, was of a contrary opinion ; and, at length determined on deserting the hovel whose bread was at once so hard and scanty, but whose words and blows,

though equally hard, were superabundant. He was a bad straw-plaiter. But there was no reason, he thought, that a frame so robust as his might not prove expert at some more manly calling. The Sunday-school at Two-Waters had made a scholar of him ; that is, he could write his own name, and spell other people's when written, without much difficulty; and entertained little doubt (at fourteen years of age who does ?) of being able to make his way in the world.

Most people have a vein of poetry in their souls, if they only knew where to find it. The silver thread in the iron or brazen nature of Tom Scroggs was a fond affection for a little sister two years younger than himself ; a blue-eyed, flaxen-haired, diminutive creature, the most adroit of the hereditary race of straw-plaiters.

To quit little Mary without a word of farewell, was out of the question ; and the word farewell, the first he had ever had occasion to utter, brought a flood of tears. Tears purify the stubborn heart, as dew freshens the flower, and even the weed ; and, in the moment of tenderness following

this expansion of spirit, Tom confided all to his sister!

Now Mary was meek-spirited, and trembled for her brother. Stories of run-away children form the romance of the humble hearth-side; and in the agony of her little bursting heart she rose betimes from the straw-pallet shared by their younger sisters, and went and told her tale to her parents, that they might intercept the escape of Master Thomas.

The father's first impulse was, of course, to inflict such chastisement upon the boy as might render his distasteful home still more distasteful. But, after the severe thrashing which he knew would render escape impossible for a time, Scroggs the elder made proof that second thoughts are best, by proceeding to the neighbouring paper-mill, and obtaining for his uncouth offspring occupation in the factory. Before the day was up, the gaunt lad was established as an extra errand-boy,—on the ground, perhaps, of having for his years the longest legs in the parish.

The clumsy delinquent was by degrees promoted to the honour of blacking shoes

and cleaning knives, to the relief of the parlour-maid, who waited at table in the establishment. But he was still too great a Yahoo to be admitted to an ostensible share of her labours. The manufacturer's wife, though far from a fine lady, saw the impossibility of producing before company, as her foot-page, a Hottentot, the sleeves of whose fustian jacket, and the legs of whose fustian trousers were always a world too short for his tremendous elongation.

At sixteen, Tom was still an unlicked cub. He was the odd man, that is the odd boy, of the household ; worked in the garden, fed rabbits, split wood, went on errands,—no matter what ; but still he was so gigantic for his years that these puerile occupations appeared as little suitable to him as the distaff of Omphale to the hands of the great club-man of the antique world.

Don Juan or Byron—for Don Juan is but the comic mask of the noble poet, as Childe Harold his tragic one, assures us that

'Tis pleasant to be school'd in a strange tongue
By female lips and eyes.

In humble life, it is perhaps equally agree-

able to be instructed in the folding of tablecloths, and filling of salt-cellars, by female hands. The severest butler, the most barbarous groom of the chambers, would not have made so accomplished a scholar of Scroggs junior, as the burnished, bustling, little damsel, whose cherry-coloured cheeks vied with her cherry-coloured ribands, officiating as commander-in-chief in the pantry of the paper-mill. Maria's chidings were so much like praise!—Maria's chidings of the errand-boy's awkwardness being, of course, just as coquettish in their way, as the *agaceries* of a young lady in her third London season, touching the little faults of a raw ensign in the Guards,—that is, a raw ensign having a handsome face or handsome fortune!—The ensign in the Guards so piquantly chided, becomes a dandy; the cub so charmingly cuffed, an accomplished footman.

Thus pleasantly passed the tenour of Tom Scroggs's days; including the Sundays which, by permission of his Pharaoh of the mill, were usually spent in wandering about the green lanes by Gadesbridge or

Gaddesden, with his sisters ; the straw-bonnet of his darling Mary being twisted round with a garland of woodbine or wild clematis, or hazel-nuts, pulled for her by his high-reaching hand. Succeeding years might have worn away with little vicissitude, save those of summer and winter, spring and autumn, which changed the garlands from green wheat-ears to yellow, or the bouquets from bundles of violets to bundles of cornflowers,—when, lo ! some malicious influence willed that the gaunt errand-boy of the paper-mill should be despatched with a packet of stationery to the steward's room, or office, of Ashbridge Castle—the Windsor of the neighbourhood of Boxmoor.

From his boyhood, on occasions of batues in the woods, Tom Scroggs had made his way into those aristocratic precincts ; had penetrated into the green grassy dells, and gazed with admiring eyes upon the herded deer gathered under their drooping beech-trees, the pride of the neighbourhood.

But he had never approached the house,

then but recently completed. To *him* it was as a majestic and forbidden palace—magical in its structure as that of Aladdin ;—a thing to dream of in awe and rapture, as the eternal palace of the Unspeakable.

But upon this occasion, he was privileged to “pass the guards, the gates, the wall ;”—to penetrate the courts, both outer and inner, and finally make way into the domestic offices of the potentate so great in his eyes, to whom his burthen was addressed, as “The Right Honourable Earl of Bridgewater.”

On his way, the eye of the young errand-man caught a glimpse of a terrestrial Paradise beyond all his former imaginings !

On the smooth shaven lawn before the long Gothic front of the hall, the white freestone of which was carved and pierced as though minarets of Brussels lace were uplifted in the air,—on the smooth-shaven lawn, green as though one entire and perfect emerald lay extended in the sunshine, or rather, not an emerald, but a soft expanse of verdant velvet, worthy the foot of a queen, and the tripsome steps of her lovely ladies

of honour,—on the smooth-shaven lawn, was a wicket set up ; and lo ! a group of well-made, well-dressed individuals, in nankeen tights and silk stockings, and shirts of snowy whiteness, were indulging in the midsummer pastime of cricket !

For a moment, Tom Scroggs entertained little doubt that these gentlemen whose laughter was ringing in the air, while their balls were bounding along the green, could be none other than the goodly sons of the Earl (albeit, sons he had none), or Members of Parliament, or great lords, or perhaps captains of the armies of the King.

But, on comparing the nankeen tights and woven silk enveloping their lower man, with the nankeen tights and woven silk adorning the extremities of certain bystanders, over whose shirts were still buttoned the livery coats of the house of Egerton, Tom Scroggs perceived that the cricketers were none other than the lackeys of Lord Bridgewater, disporting themselves according to their custom of an afternoon, and the benign permission of the venerable Earl and Countess.

Wandering towards an iron garden-fence hard by, his eye caught sight of the coats which had been flung aside by the heroes *in cuerpo*, so much greater men *without* their laced jackets than with them. Spruce, lustrous, joyous, well powdered as they were, they were simply footmen:—not angels, but footmen!

From that moment, Tom dreamed only of a livery. From that moment, footmen became in his imagination,

gay creatures of the elements,
That in the colours of the rainbow live ;

happy individuals in nankeen tights and shirts of fine Irish ; whose chief occupation in the household of an Earl is to play cricket on a green lawn alternated with shade and sunshine by quivering beech-trees.

Tom had never been in London ; never heard

the rattle of street-pacing steeds,—

nor the rat-tat-too of a footman's thundering rap. Vigils, cares, watchings, waitings, were mysteries to *him* !

But be it freely admitted that Tom Scroggs, like Cæsar, was ambitious. He began to loathe the sight, sound, and smell of the mill. He despised the simple suits and simpler manners of the workmen. Assuming the folly of Malvolio, he could think of nothing but lords and ladies. To tread evermore upon smooth lawns or smoother carpets,—to play everlastingly cricket and the fool,—oh happy fate!—oh ! thrice, thrice happy footmen !

Tom, though a rebellious, had not been a bad son. From the period of his having wages at command, they were transferred to the house on Boxmoor ; and sister Mary had now a handsome shawl for Sundays, to enhance the simplicities of her straw-bonnet.

But thenceforward he was generous no longer. He had become an egotist,—the first step towards becoming a great man. As a preliminary to silk hose, he made a purchase of cotton ones to replace on Sundays his coarse, speckled worsted stockings ; and became, by one, by two, and by three, a man of many shirts.

By degrees his wardrobe grew and grew ;

and, though it contained nothing which the gentleman in nankeen summer-tights would not have consigned to the flames or the old clothes' shop, it was as dawning of dandyism to the Hertfordshire clown.

An ambitious mind is not disposed to let "I dare not, wait upon I would." Tom was well aware that a livery would not fall, like the prophet's mantle, on his shoulders, while he stood gazing afar off upon the splendour of Ashbridge Castle ; and, after much heart-aching and head-aching, yearning and spurning, aspiring and desiring, Tom Scroggs gave warning at the mill, and came straight to town, where his handsome person and a four years' character procured him a situation as second footman in the family of a wealthy cit, not too choice in the graces of his lackeys. A firm, active, good-humoured-looking young man, to go behind Mrs. Graham's blue coach with red wheels, in a green livery, and help to wait at table at his villa at Edmonton, was all he wanted ; and Scroggs was the man for his money. "Thomas was the civilest fellow in the world. Thomas was a trump !"

All this was miles and miles distant from

the nankeen tights and greensward of Ashbridge;—and the soul of genius was burning within the body of Thomas, and consuming it away. Nothing like a secret grief for refining the mind and manners! In the pantry of the Grahams, the pensive youth sat and dreamed of the West End. No boy-member, conscious of the inspirations of a Fox or a Burke, ever sighed more wofully after distinction. The blue coach and its modest cipher were loathsome in his sight. He wanted coronets and supporters. He wanted a simple livery, in place of the spinach-coloured coat, and the lace wherewith he was bedizened. He wanted levees, — he wanted drawing-rooms — at which to display his noble proportions.

There does not exist an object of modern art, or an adjunct of modern civilization, more exclusively and peculiarly artificial, than the London chariot of some fashionable English duchess. A *bijou*, in all but dimensions, the ease of its movements, smooth as the address of a ministerial candidate,—the lustre of its component parts, polished as the manners of a Lord Cham-

berlain,—the precision, elegance, symmetry, and proportion of its distribution,—the blood horses,—the harness so light, and yet so heavy,—the coachman in his snow-white wig and cocked hat, so ponderous, yet so light of hand,—the elastic cushions, with their pale delicate silk lace, the polished ivory handles,—the fleecy rug,—the resplendent panels,—the varnish, black as jet,—are glorious attributes of the life that begins at two o'clock in the day, and ends at four o'clock in the morning!

The best part of the town chariot, however, consists decidedly in its brace of standard footmen. A pair of anything—saving a matrimonial pair—is sure to have an harmonious appearance. A pair of pictures, a pair of statues, a pair of vases, a pair of consoles, a pair of shells, sells for fourfold the money of the same objects, single. There is something in the words “a good match” agreeable to other ears besides the mothers of many daughters. Most things in nature are of the dual number. Substance bears its shadow,—sound its echo ;—and happiness is by no means

the only abstract sentiment that is “born a twin.”

But of all the happy pairs in creation, few are more agreeable to the eye than a pair of standard footmen. Sportsmen, accustomed to talk of partridges and Mantons, usually say brace;—but pair comes more glibly. A pair of standard footmen seems to be the real pair of inexpressibles.

For many years, it was the custom of every servants' hall to have its hiring-stand, whereby the altitude of the footman presenting himself for an engagement, was decided. *Mais nous avons changé tout cela.* Now-a-days, a box is set up, compact as a coffin, in which the absolute dimensions of the appendage to the town chariot, are minutely verified;—so many inches across the shoulders,—in girth so much, and so forth. The match must be as exact as that of a pair of Shetland ponies destined to run in a royal carriage. Even complexion and whiskers come into the account; and last season, it transpired that one of the most elegant and fashionable countesses of the day had sent for her apothecary, and placed one of her standard footmen under as severe

a course of medicine and regimen as though he had been about to run for the Derby, because he was outgrowing his measure, and was too accomplished a fellow to be dismissed from her service for obesity. It was an easier affair to starve him down, than replace him.

Bitter was the anguish of spirit with which the Thomas of the Barbican contemplated these aristocrats of the shoulder-knot, as they flitted past him, mounted on their monkey-boards, behind the brilliant equipages of the season.

Everybody knows who looks at a balloon, that it is destined for the skies ; and everybody knew who looked at Thomas that he was assured of the future honours of the standard. But the air-balloon takes a terrible long time in the filling ; exposed to endless bumpings and thumpings in the contest between its skyward and earthward tendency. Equally percussive were the changes of Tom Scroggs's fortunes, while vibrating between the East end and the West.

Suffice it for posterity that, in the twenty-third year of his age,—this boy premier,

this Pitt of the shoulder-knot,—was established as the second of the two helots in blue and gold of the fashionable young Countess of Frothington, in Carlton Gardens ;—the most accomplished of his vocation,—the Trip of living life.

Never was there such a Thomas seen as *our* Thomas ;—

— a creature

Framed in the very poetry of nature ;

a picture of a standard footman ; a man who might have preceded the sedan of Lady Teazle or the beautiful Lady Coventry ; or delivered in the ticket of the fairest of duchesses, at Hastings's trial.

Where had he attained all these accomplishments ? There is a college in Normandy for the education of learned poodles, where they take degrees as bachelors of the arts of telling fortunes on cards, or become Doctors Bowwowring. But *is* there within the bills of mortality a school for the perfecting of footmen ? A poet is born a poet ; —a standard footman can scarcely be born a standard footman ;—or, at all events, little Tom Scroggs was not born the unequalled Thomas of Carlton Gardens.

Imagine the marble of the Apollo Belvedere mollified by a tepid bath, and dressed by Meyer or Curlewis in a suit fitting as close as the glove of an *élégante* of the Chaussée d'Antin, or the calyx of a rose-bud!—Imagine a head powdered and perfumed like that of Fleury in the part of some charming Marquis!—Imagine a cocked-hat with its silver-lace and tassels so nicely balanced over the well-powdered head, that if “zephyr blowing underneath the violet, not wagging its sweet head,” had chosen to have a blow at the head of Thomas, it must have been blown over.

No need to dwell upon the whiskers, arranged in tiers of curls, five tiers in the right whisker and four in the left, according to the fashion of the most memorable coxcomb of the day. No need to enlarge upon a complexion which perhaps owed something to the Kalydor and Gowland, said by Lord Frothington's *valet de chambre* to disappear in a most mysterious manner from his lordship's toilet-table, with his orange-flower pomatum and *bouquet de verveine*. No need to describe the fit of a varnished shoe, “small by degrees, and

beautifully less," at the extremity of a manly leg, vying with that of Pam on a court card.

For the distinctions of Thomas were not solely physical. Thomas was a Rochester in refinement of mind as well as body. For four preceding years, Thomas had made the Morning Post his daily study, and the Peerage and Baronetage his Sunday reading. Thomas knew what was what, and who was whom ;—everybody by name who *had* a name, and anybody by sight worthy to meet the eyes of a standard footman.

Whatever carriage might roll to the door in Carlton Gardens,—for its footman to deliver the name of the visitors was wholly superfluous. The Heralds' college could not have produced a more cunning interpreter of arms and liveries than Thomas. He was a living Court Guide, an ambulatory Directory. No sooner had two syllables of the name of the person she intended to visit escaped the lips of the young Countess of Frothington, than Thomas was perched behind the chariot beside Henry, like twin Mercuries "new lighted on a

heaven-kissing hill," while a distinct enunciation, "clear as a trumpet with a silver sound," conveyed instructions to the coachman. Off, like an arrow from a bow, went the carriage ; obeying, like the magic horse of a fairy tale, the scarcely expressed wishes of its lovely mistress—the spell being breathed by the accomplished lips of Thomas.

It has been hinted, that Lady Frothington's two Trips were so Machiavelic in their policy, so perfect in their tact, as to know precisely at what part of the file of carriages at the Opera, Almack's, or other balls, to place her ladyship's chariot, so as to be within reach at the precise moment they were likely to be called for. They were supposed to be able to infer, to a second, at what o'clock the Countess was likely to be bored, according to the carriages and cabriolets in waiting ; or the likelihood of a division in the House of Commons ; or the claims of a party at the palace.

On observing, for instance, the pretty Viscountess alight from her carriage, attired in her *châtelaine* of diamonds, when his

own lady happened to wear only flowers or turquoises. Certain that the Countess would shrink from being overblazed, Thomas, hastened to bring up Lady Frothington's equipage within ready reach, and kept as close to the door as was compatible with the unsavoury odours of the linkmen and other fractions of the populace who congregate at the heels of the police, wherever lords and ladies assemble together for the purpose of sitting through a ball, or talking through a concert.

The moment a certain cabriolet was seen to drive up, on the other hand, and deposit one of the most popular of aristocratic dandies, Thomas would intimate to the coachman that he might retire to the opposite side of the square, or end of the street, and enjoy his two hours' snooze, unmolested by the coughing of horses, the smashing of panels, or the snoring of his brother whips.—Exact as an astronomer's calculations of a planet's rising and setting, were those of the standard footman touching the duration of the flirtations of her ladyship.

In former times, in the old-fashioned halls of our family mansions, the domestics of visitors were allowed to sit down and wait for their masters and mistresses,—for the season being then winter, the footmen would have run some chance of being frozen to death at the doors ; and highly offensive were the results of a practice which compelled young and gentle ladies to confront the ordeal of their insolent stare and vulgar comments, on their way to the uncloaking room.

Now, it is considered that the insolent stare and vulgar comments of the dandies above, are sufficient ; and few and quizzical are the houses where the livery of London is admitted beyond the threshold. A modern vestibule, delicately carpeted and filled with exotics, is a far more appropriate portico to the temple of pleasure, than a hall full of dusty or damp livery-servants.

Now that the regulations of the police are as accurate as the scapements of clock-work,—now that the London season commences with the strawberries, and ends with pheasant-shooting,—the appropriate

place for footmen is the pavement, or the coach-box, over the opposite corners of whose hammercloth the twin Mercuries swing their legs and canes on either side of Coachy, like genii perched upon the marble angles of a monument in Westminster Abbey.

There they talk,—
Ye gods, how they do talk,—

of the state of the nation,—the state of lords and ladies,—the state of ladies who love their lords, and lords who love their ladies.

They know everything,—they say everything. With *them* no delicate hints,—no slight insinuations,—no shirking a question, or diplomatising an answer. They are in everybody's secrets. My lady can only surmise the mysteries of my lord, or my lord those of my lady. Their footmen are at the bottom of both. Their footmen have compared notes with the footmen who bring their notes. However cautiously the secret may have been worded in the morning, it is sure to be blurted out without reserve, at night, between the accomplished

gentleman in blue and gold, and the accomplished gentleman in silver and white.

At the gate of Kensington Gardens, or the Zoological Gardens, or *déjeûners*, or exhibitions, day after day, a meeting assembles like that of the Scientific Association, calculated to bring all things to light. The gossip of one fashionable dinner-table, alone, within ear-shot of three or four first-rate Thomases, is sufficient to disperse throughout the town rumours enough to set a hundred families of consideration into a ferment.

Perhaps the most fastidious gentleman now extant is the standard footman. The style in which he surveys a snobby equipage, —or answers the “Lady Frothington at home?” of some stunted Richard in a quiz-zical livery, the armorial bearings correspondent with which have neither place nor station in Debrett or Lodge, might form a study for the less impertinent scorers of Crockford’s.

The eye of half vacant wonder with which he contrives to express his amazement that such *very* obscure individuals should exist in the world, and such very

detestable equipages be allowed to go about; and the extraordinary flexibility of feature whereby he conveys his utter alienation and estrangement of nature from the animal who affects confraternization with him, because also arrayed in a parti-coloured coat,—is beyond all praise. Brummell could not have done it better, when wreaking his dandified contempts upon his “fat friend” George the Fourth.

In this superlative exquisitism of the shoulder-knot, the Thomas of Carlton Gardens excelled.

“Going to Willis’s with your vouchers? Then pray change ours for me,” said a certain James, the Trip of Lady R., a banker’s lady of Cavendish Square, on meeting Lady Frothington’s Trip in the neighbourhood of King Street, one Wednesday morning.

“*Weeleeses?*” ejaculated Thomas, with a countenance calculated to turn sour all the cream in Grange’s shop,—“of what are you talking? My dear fellow,—you don’t suppose *we* go to Almack’s?—Her ladyship refused the patroness-ship last season. Al-

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mack's is vastly well to bring out squire's daughters, or push the acquaintance of banker's wives ; but we have given it up these two years."

Thomas is an epicure as well as a dandy. Thomas never tastes ice of anything but fresh strawberries, after March. When accompanying other 'Thomases to the doors of "dealers in British compounds," (while waiting for her ladyship at those privileged parties, when the carriage is despatched to the other end of the street or side of the square) Thomas is scrupulously careful to quaff, in a tumbler, the brown stout which less fastidious flunkeys are satisfied to swallow from the pewter.

Nor would Thomas derange the set of his well-starched cravat, by turning round to look at the prettiest nursery-maid tripping down the steps of Carlton Gardens into the park ; the plait of his shirt-frill being quite as much an object to *him*, as to any of the irresistibles who have given to the fashionable clubs the aspect of milliner's shops.

Thomas is not aware of the existence of

the multitudinous untitled, saving as "the populace." He talks about "the people" as being never contented; and wonders what all this rubbish can mean about the repeal of the Corn Laws. As he steps jauntily across the kennel, with his hat on one side, and his thumb jerked negligently into his waistcoat, on his way to deliver a note to the handsome young Marquis, Thomas is fifty times as fine a gentleman as any one of the heroes of the nankeen tights.

But who on earth would ever detect the ragged urchin of Boxmoor in this essenced fop,—this sunny epicurean!—Who would ever surmise the lanky errand-boy of the mill at Two-Waters, in Lady Frothington's
STANDARD FOOTMAN?

THE LADY'S-MAID.

THE name bestowed by modern parlance upon the waiting or tirewoman, denotes youth and jauntiness. The very word "maid" seems to anticipate the qualifying adjection of "fair" or "pretty," as naturally as in the polite circles of Austria, the word "*frau*" receives the prefix of "*gnädige*." And though it must be admitted that toothless and grey-haired wives and widows often pass under the general designation of ladies' maids, it is still held an essential distinction of lady's-maidism, to possess a pleasing exterior.

The lady's-maid is the flower of the domestic establishment, — the Proserpine of the lower regions, — the *élégante*, whose graces of mind and manners bewilder the minds of the footmen, to whom, with super-

cilious scorn she delivers the orders of her principals ;—a stumbling-block in the eyes of venerable butlers, as Maria in those of Malvolio, and a target for the merry jests of the servants' hall.

The lady's-maid is my lady's shadow ; a parody upon the *chef-d'oeuvre* of elegance, to whose cast-off clothes, airs, and graces, she has the honour to succeed. Though worn to the bone by the labours of office, —though deprived of her rest by my lady's dissipation, and of her meals by my lady's selfishness,—though harassed by flaws of temper and caprices of taste, there is a species of one and indivisibility between the mistress and maid, characteristic of the umbrageous nature pointed out. An instinctive *esprit de corps* unites the daughter of Eve who washes the laces, and is to inherit them, with the daughter of Eve who wears them in her pinnners.

Against my master, or my lord, on the other hand, the lady's-maid cherishes an intuitive antipathy. Even my master's own man,—nay, even the family butler and coachman does she detest, as dependencies

of "master." "Master," is a tyrant,—master is a nuisance,—master is never satisfied,—master is always complaining of the manner in which his linen is starched, or left unstarched ; and master's shirt-buttons have twice as great an aptitude to come off as any other gentleman's.

And then, master keeps such hours ! Master goes to bed, and rises earlier than can be accounted for on any other principle than that of matrimonial contrariety. Master comes into my lady's dressing-room in dirty boots ; or sets down his flat candlestick on a new cap. Master is full of fancies,—such as having his newspapers ironed ; and worrets people out of their lives about keeping dinner or horses waiting.—According to the lady's-maid there is no end to the peccadillos of "master."

Not but that my lady has her faults too. My lady is sadly thoughtless and heedless ; and seems to think people have twenty pair of hands, and no need of rest or recreation. But she is such a good creature, after all ! And, if it were not for having

such a brute of a husband, she would be such a sweet-tempered lady.—Ah! poor thing! if people only knew what they were about when they married!

The lady's-maid swears she would not change her situation for anything that anybody could offer her; that is, her situation in life. As regards her vocation, it must be admitted that she enjoys peculiar advantages. Other slaveys occupy the post of Tantalus. The butler is no wise privileged to be the better for the wine he is decanting, or the plate he is cleaning; or the gardener for the pines or peaches he is forcing. But if the task of the lady's-maid be an eternal smoothing of coats, and darning of pinholes, *she* at least has a vested interest in the fruit of her labours. The lawn kerchief, or brocaded mantle, will one day be her own; and the young heir who watches the growth of his father's plantations, is not more personally interested in their well-doing, than the lady's-maid in the safe packing of her lady's imperials and chaise-seat.

The lady's-maid is usually an hysterical,

nervous personage. Her constitution is broken by irregular rest and irregular diet. Addicted to novels and green tea, she is not aware that her tender hypochondriacism is the result of swallowing her dinner whole, to be in time for dressing my lady for her daily drive; and of restless nights, spent in watching at the dressing-room window for the return of my lady's carriage from the ball. On the contrary, she admits that she is a poor, weak-spirited creature; but swears, like Cassio, that she "had it from her mother."

It is a strange thing that, howbeit, we all admit the difficulty of being a hero to one's *valet de chambre*, or an angel to one's lady's maid,—every lady insists upon the maid being an angel to her lady. The mistress has a right to be *en déshabille* at certain hours of the day. The maid never. The maid must be always presentable,—always smiling. Curl-papers are warning, and a slipshod foot dismissal without a character. Whether in drawing my lady's curtain at dead of night, or undrawing it at daybreak, she must be *tirée à quatre épingles*, and

neither look fatigued, nor restless, nor sick, nor sorry. A weary eye, or a pale face, would condemn her to hear that "her health was not equal to her situation." For with the exception of an inquisitor of Spain, there are few things more cruel than a fine lady.

Having laid it down as an axiom that a lady's-maid is simply her lady's shadow, it is almost unnecessary to add, that there are as many varieties of ladies' maids as of roses and geraniums : serious ladies' maids, fashionable ladies' maids, ladies' maids on their preferment, flirting ladies' maids,—and so forth.

The serious lady's maid is pretty sure to be privately married to the butler, or to have a weakness for the under-footman. The fashionable lady's maid is above such vulgarisms ; talks of " the circle she moves in," and goes to the Opera. The lady's maid on her preferment, converts my lady's cast off satins and *guipures* into cash, and talks of her property in the funds. While the flirting lady's maid converts them to her own use ; has a correspondence in verse

with one of the young gentlemen at Howell and James's, which does not prevent her lending an ear to a thousand tender nothings when the country-house is full of dandies, masters, and men, for the hunting and shooting season.

Most of these flutterlings of the basement story dote upon London and the season. Despite their vigils and wearyings, they love the stir and movement of that sunny period when my lady's diamonds emerge from their morocco cases, and every day brings home some new dress, bonnet, or cap, creaking up the back stairs in the milliner's basket. They love the noise, glitter, and outlay of such a time. They delight in gauds of silver and gold, and all the intertanglements of pink, blue, and lilac, devised by haberdashers for the perdition of the female kind. A new ribbon distracts them as a vacant riband the sovereign.

The Drawing Room is the grand event of the lady's-maid. "My lady looks so very sweet in her feathers, lappets, and family diamonds; and the *real* lady is never more distinguishable from the upstart than in her

train and point !” An unusual flush mantles on her cheek as she indulges in the plebeian vice of gazing out of the window upon the departing chariot, with its well-wigged coachman, and pair of standard footmen, alike as the two Antipholi, or as Dromio and his *fac-simile*, to the very buckles in their shoes, and bouquets in their button-holes. She is conscious of having sent forth my lady to go, see, and conquer; proud that the labour of her hands should figure in presence of the court.

Though selectly select in her visiting-list, her acquaintance in town is considerable; and the best mansions in May-Fair contribute their quota of ladies'-maids to her whist-table on Opera nights, or royal ball nights, when she is sure of getting rid of my lady at an early hour.

The Dowager Duchess's maid, on the other hand, steps in on Sunday nights, her Grace who is serious and averse to Sabbath-breaking, giving freedom to her men and maid servants on the Lord's day. But for her own part, she is not averse to the Park or Kensington Gardens on Sundays, when

she can secure a proper escort ; or a trip to Epsom with a subscription carriage, half-and-half with the Marchioness's people, and the Marquis's champagne and sandwiches gratis. She owns she loves a little innocent recreation.

Hitherto, the lady's-maid has been described in the single number, and, consequently, in her most amiable form. But, when two or more ladies'-maids are gathered together in one establishment, Heaven have a care of it ! Queen Bess, that shrewdest of legislatresses, observed of her royal rival of Scotland, that " the sky would not bear two suns ; nor England two queens." Still less, one roof two ladies'-maids !

From the moment my young lady, or my young ladies grow up, and require a maid of their own, there is an end of the peace of the establishment. The precedence of the case, indeed, takes care of itself. As a peer walks before a peer's elder son, mamma's maid walks before the maid of her daughters. But the petty jealousies, heresies, and schisms hourly arising in the housekeeper's room, are beyond even the adjustment of

the Herald's Office. The sensitive creatures fight for everything; and when there is nothing to be fought for, like an Irishman in a row, fight for nothing. They are at dagger's drawn for the butler's affections, for the merry-thoughts of the chickens, for the middle piece of the toast, for the snuffers, the poker, the newspaper, the date of her Majesty's approaching accouchement, the duration of the next ministry, and the odd trick.—*Bella,—horrida bella!*—Incessant wars and rumours of war,—“war to the curling irons!”

At a fashionable country mansion a visitor once picked up a letter near the offices, containing the reply of the servants of a neighbouring nobleman to an invitation to a steward's-room ball. “Mrs. Simpkins would have the honour of waiting upon Mrs. Spriggins, *but the young ladies'-maid was not yet out.*”

This is the heart of the mystery! The senior lady's-maid is apt to assume airs of chaperonship,—to play the dowager,—to rebuke over-tricksomeness of costume,—to call flirting young *valets de chambre*

to account, and inquire into their "intentions." The junior consequently rebels,— asserts her independence, and will not be put upon. To incrimination follows recrimination. "A few words" ensue ; "and if" in words "the more the merrier," the fewer, the bitterer. A strife of ladies' maids is as the wrangling of parrots. With ladies'-maid as with church preferments, therefore, let all right-thinking people eschew pluralities.

But if such the discourse where two or more ladies'-maids are concerned, what shall we say of the envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, engendered in a house where the dowager's lady's-maid is a sober, middle-aged English waiting gentlewoman, wearing spectacles in the housekeeper's room, and a silk front everywhere ; and the junior a little French soubrette, her hair *coiffé en bandeaux*, while the muslin that *ought* to have been converted into a cap, figures in the shape of an embroidered apron.

The senior calls the junior a play-actress ; the junior calls the senior a duenna. The young ladies side with Mademoiselle

Eugénie, who braids their locks and crimps their ringlets so charmingly, who assures one that she is *gantée à ravir*, and another that she is *chaussée comme un ange*; while the mamma naturally takes part with the Sobersides who has so much sympathy with her rheumatism, and who caps texts with her while arranging the folds of her turban. An intervention and non-intervention war is waged between the parties; and Lord Palmerston and Monsieur Thiers are nothing to Mrs. Smallridge and Mademoiselle Eugénie in the punctiliousness of their opposition.

The merry little *femme de chambre*—(for a French lady's maid, though single, assumes in Great Britain) the womanly designation withheld from her, though double,—the merry little *femme de chambre* runs about the house, only the more enlivened by the feud. Her very work is play to her. She enjoys the idea of the young ladies' balls, even at second-hand. A perpetual course of hair-dressing, frilling, flouncing, and tying of bows, is her *beau idéal* of the duties of life.

Provided "*ces chères demoiselles*" distinguish themselves in society by the elegance of their dress, she is satisfied. She complains of nothing but the want of sunshine and play-going;—of "*ce vilain climat*," and "*cet éternel go-to-shursh*."

Reports of Mademoiselle Eugénie's having proposed a game of *écarté* to the butler on a rainy Sunday afternoon in the country, at length, however, reach the heads of the family, and produce her dismissal; Mrs. Smallridge (who has been reading *Tom Jones* meanwhile, with locked doors, in her own room) having signified that "matters can't go on in *that* way," and that one or other of them must leave the house. On such grounds, the dowager lady's maid is privileged to be authoritative. Her threat suffices. Even in the best regulated families she has been trusted too much behind the curtain, to be safely trusted before it. Off, therefore, goes poor Mademoiselle; and Mrs. Smallridge thenceforward assumes airs of despotism in the housekeeper's room, such as would not sit amiss upon the Shah of Persia.

We have asserted that it is desirable for for the lady's maid to be of a fair presence. But this rule is observable within limitation. A lady's maid may be a vast deal too pretty for her place. We remember one who had indeed a right to the prefix of "fair," and who was fairly ruined by the distinction. She was one of the many who, from being taken out of her own situation in life, become fit for no situation at all,—or, at all events, become most disagreeably situated.

A cottager's child with a pretty face, and the pretty name of Alice, certain sentimental young ladies who resided in a cottage of gentility in the village, smitten with her pink cheeks and flaxen curls, selected the poor child as a picturesque object whereupon to exercise their benevolent propensities. Half the fair philanthropists labouring in the by-ways of human nature are singularly biassed in the selection of their *protégés*, by comeliness and favour ; though the ugly ones be far more in need of aid along the thorny place of this brambly world.

But little Alice looked so pretty over her spelling-book or sampler, in the parlour furnished with muslin curtains and faded gilt card-racks, that half the time of the morning visitors was taken up in calling her "sweet dear," and asking whether she were not *very* grateful to the "kind young ladies" who took so much heed of her; till the child grew vain, unsuspecting that she was only there to minister to the vanity of others. She minded her book a little, but the visitors more; and at twelve years old, knew just enough to be in the way of the young ladies, and out of the way of advancement in life.

Had she been pug-nosed or freckled, and brought up like other ugly girls at the village-school, Alice would have learned scrubbing and plain work, and her services been early available in her family or elsewhere. But on returning at twelve years old, spoiled, to the cottage, she was good for no manner of thing but to be scolded.

She was twitted with the whiteness of her hands and blackness of her disposition, till her pretty blue eyes became of a

permanent red with crying ; and had not the "superior" of a sort of Do-the-girls' Hall establishment advertised for a genteel apprentice, and one of the kind young ladies assisted her pupil into the office, by way of getting a troublesome hanger-on still further out of the way, the poor girl would probably have dissolved, like Arethusa, into a fountain of tears.

At the end of her seven years' apprenticeship, pretty Alice was prettier than ever, and almost as helpless. She had acquired a smattering of French, a smattering of fine work, a smattering of personal graces, enough to make a lady's maid, yet not enough to make a governess. Being a very good girl withal,—gentle-hearted, affectionate, modest, simple,—she was sadly afraid of becoming a burthen to her parents, and eager to push her way in the world ; and the "kind young ladies," who had now progressed into middle-aged ladies, remembering the former advantage of an advertisement, tried again.

On examining the County Chronicle, "a genteel young person" was again found

wanting in the county town, as attendant upon the daughters of the rich banker; whose villa and conservatory, kept at the cost of the place, were its pride and glory.

But after the transportation of Alice, with much difficulty, to be examined as to her qualifications and recommendations by Mrs. Crabstock in person, the pretty maid was dismissed, unexamined. Her fault lay upon the surface. No need for cross-questioning. She was told that she was too young. The letter of explanation she brought back to the kind middle-aged ladies was more candid. Mrs. Crabstock simply observed, "I have several sons."

The kind middle-aged ladies accordingly looked out for a place in a family as exclusively female as their own; and were fortunate in persuading Lady Crossgrain, a wealthy widow, with an only daughter, to receive as second maid a young person of undeniable character, so well brought up as to be almost a companion for Miss Crossgrain. That "almost" was again fatal!—It was a severe winter. Society was

scarce at Crossgrain Hall. Pretty Alice *was* accepted as almost a companion. She was really an acquisition. The simple girl was so genuinely delighted by her young lady's fine playing and fine singing; and stood with such untiring ears to listen!

Unluckily, she looked prettier than ever in that listening attitude. Since the days of Ellen Douglas, no one ever listened half so charmingly; and when at length there arrived from the Continent the tall cousin, Sir Jacob Crossgrain, who, it was intended by her ladyship, should unite the title and estates of the family by an union with the heiress, it became evident that there was not the slightest chance of the consummation so devoutly to be wished, so long as Miss Crossgrain's coarse black locks were seen in contrast with the silken curls of Alice, or the high shoulders of the young lady with the graceful form of the young lady's maid.

Poor Alice was consequently turned adrift again. But, as in conscience bound, the Crossgrains disposed of her discreetly with another widow lady, where there was no daughter to be eclipsed by her charms.

Without offspring to engross her attention, Mrs. Murray had scarcely an object on which to bestow her affections, saving her own face in the glass ; and at three-and-forty it is no such pleasant thing for a crowsfooted coquette to find a fair young seraphic visage perpetually reflected over her shoulder, like a moral tacked to the last page of a romance. Nothing more easy than to discover a seam awry in Alice's sewing, and turn her again upon the wide world !

So was it everywhere. Either there were sons, brothers, or nephews, whose hearts and the respectability of the community might be endangered,—or “ missus ” was of a jealous temper, — or my lady ambitious of remaining the only beauty in the house. Love followed as naturally in the wake of poor Alice as Cupid in that of Venus ; and she would have done well to get inoculated with confluent small pox, or tattooed with permanent ink.

It would be painful to pursue the career of so sweet a creature through all its griefs and grievances. Alice is now, at

thirty, and sorely against her will, a chorus singer at a minor theatre. Miserable as is her pittance, and degraded her position, it was impossible for so meek a nature to bear up against the insults and hardships heaped upon her as an over-pretty LADY'S-MAID.

THE FAMILY BUTLER.

IMPOSSIBLE to approach with too grave a step the consideration of a functionary so important as the Family Butler!—Linkmen, and even footmen, are of the populace; baptized more or less indelibly with the waters of the kennel. But the butler is a man so many degrees upraised above his origin, as to have cast aside his nature, and in every sense of the word to have forgotten himself. A renegade to gutter-baptism, he has gradually achieved greatness passing all human understanding—even his own.

His essential distinction is to be “highly respectable.” The family butler is one of the outward and visible graces of every family qualified to *call* itself a family. A footman is only a slovenly half-and-half appendage of gentility. People who live in

“houses” keep a footman; people who “reside” in “mansions” superadd a butler, with second, third, fourth, or fifth footmen, as the case may be. But the butler is indispensable; *i. e.* indispensable to a “family”—and “a mansion.”

Saving his presence therein, *who* would there be to drink the last three glasses out of every bottle of port,—the last two out of every bottle of sherry,—and the first of every bottle of Nantes or liqueur? Who would there be to detect an oversight in the brewer’s bill of seven-pence-halfpenny to his master’s disadvantage, and exact at the same time a mulct of five-and-twenty per cent. in his own favour? Who would there be to complain of the badness of the broadcloth in the liveries sent home from the tailor’s; and interpolate in the bill an item of an odd waistcoat or two, furnished to himself?

The butler may be said to represent the Upper House in an Englishly constituted establishment. The servants’ hall stands for the Commons;—the steward’s or house-keeper’s room for the Lords;—master or

mistress, for the throne ; no bill passing to the sign-manual of the latter, without having progressed through the ordeal of the former two.

Of late years, it has been the custom of the Upper House of Parliament to wag its head in the face of royalty, and have a will of its own,—a will equally at variance with those above and those below. It is ever so with the butler ; who is pretty sure to be at once his master's master, and his master's servants' master. He is too powerful over the supplies not to make his authority respected. If factiously opposed by the domestics, or fractiously by their proprietor, he contrives to throw the whole weight and labour of the state upon the shoulders of the latter ; and the whole weight and labour of everything else into the hands of the former. When Louis the Fourteenth, in pursuance of his state maxim, "*l'état c'est moi*," took it into his head to become his own minister, Louvois was careful to fling into the portfolio such an agglomeration of state papers, and complication of public business, that, at the close of a few days, his Majesty

was right glad to cry for mercy, and beg the cabinet council to do his work for him, as in duty bound.

So is it with the adroit butler, on finding his lord or master impertinently bent upon "looking into things." The cellar-book,—the plate-list—and every other list—(oh! list!)—committed to his administration, made to assume a degree of mysterious complexity, defying the decipherment of Babbage.

Pipes of port, hogsheads of claret, cases of champagne, gallons of spirituous liquors, are unaccountably added up, subtracted, and divided, by the rule of three and the rule of contrary, into Babylonian confusion, such as worse confounds the confusion of the proprietor of all this intolerable quantity of sack. In the end, he throws it up as a bad job,—begins to entertain sincere compassion for the Barings and their budget,—and finally entreats the family butler will be so very obliging as to cheat him on, in peace.

The butler, according to the superficial plausibilities of civilized life, though the

booziest member of every establishment, is expected to be the most sober-looking. A peculiar decency of vesture and gesture is required of him. Something of the cut of a county member—something exceedingly square-toed and solemn,—is the complement extern most in vogue for the decanter of port.

In the households of bankers and professional men, a more dressy order of upper servant is preferred,—not only because he officiates in the double capacity of *valet de chambre*; but for the reason which induced the late Sir Charles C. to bestow badges upon his out-of-livery servants; because, having himself the air of a respectable upper servant, he was repeatedly required at his own balls to call up carriages, or bring shawls for fashionable ladies myopic enough to mistake him for his delegate.

But, though sober-looking as a judge, the butler should have a comely and portly aspect. He should look well-fed and uncareworn. There should be indication in his countenance that matters in his master's house move upon castors;—that the weekly

bills and refractory knife-cleaners are duly discharged ;—and that everything like an impertinent rejoinder is as carefully bottled up as the Burgundy.

He must have an air of aptitude and decision, and a tone of authoritative good breeding. It is part of his business to take the guests out of the hands of the footmen, and deliver them in proper order to his master and mistress ; tasks to be accomplished with the disdainful deference of a Lord Chamberlain.

It may be observed that the butler is almost always at daggers-drawn with his lady ; who is sure to consider him a troublesome, officious personage,—apt to quarrel with the lady's maid for being too late at meals,—and to grudge the housekeeper her due allowance of sherry and ratafia for creams and jellies.

The footman is a slave more peculiarly her own. The footman accompanies the carriage, goes on errands, remembers addresses, conveys messages to tradespeople, and is more confided in, though a less confidential servant, than the butler. The

footman has a thousand methods of judging of my lady's or the young ladies' loves and likings. He perceives in the daily drives *who* bows, *who* nods, *who* kisses hands,—*who* calls the carriage at Almack's or whispers as he hands Miss Julia into it, after the déjeûner or ball. John is able to announce a flirtation in the family to the housemaid, at least a fortnight before the butler drops a diplomatic hint to the housekeeper.

The butler is uniformly a Tory and a disciplinarian ;—thumbs the John Bull on Sundays, and spells over the Times with one eye open, after his daily quart of stout. He has a sort of sullen and interested reliance in the immutability of the Church and the Corn Laws. Butlers, bishops, and landed proprietors he fancies to be as naturally affinitive as cart and horse. There may be horses without carts, he knows, but a cart can't move without a horse. No aristocracy, secular or ecclesiastical,—no butlers ! But this, it must be admitted, is mere livery logic and kitchen-stuff.

A butler is not the only public function-

ary who entertains an inordinate respect for property, as the true criterion of human merit ; or who holds the only book worth speaking of to be a banker's. But his opinion on that point is very decided ; and, so far from admitting that

Learning is better than house or land,

he respects the proprietor of a cow-shed more than a senior wrangler or Seatonian prize-man. The three things he most detests to see at his master's table are, a bottle of the old Madeira he keeps for his private drinking, a poor relation, and an author. It puts him out of his calculations, indeed, to find every now and then a new novel announced by a Lady Clara, or a new poem by a Lord John ; for he owns " he can't abide to hear of the nobility descending to such low-lived things."

There are, of course, as many classes of butlers in town and country, as there are of London men and country gentlemen. But it may suffice to consider two species of the genus : fierce extremes, such as the butler of Russell and the butler of Grosve-

nor Squares,—“alike, but oh ! how different !”—dissimilar in aspect and aspirations as a Guineaman and a Hindoo.

The butler of Russell Square is an obese, hazy-eyed personage, declining in years and in the corners of his mouth, sullen in disposition, yet to his superiors submissively spoken ; having an eye to the main chance and to Mrs. Dobinson's prim-visaged lady's maid.

His master, Mr. Dobinson of Russell Square, is a thriving stockbroker, rich enough to be a prompt paymaster, and consequently to take the liberty of examining his own accounts ; a sufficient pretext for his butler to regard him as a natural enemy, and to do his spiriting as ungently as Caliban.

Scrupulously punctual in the discharge of his duties, so as to escape jobation, Jobson takes a revengeful delight in the wry face which announces that a bottle of wine is corked ; or when the man in authority, after finding fault with successive carving-knives, is forced to plead guilty to the toughness of the sirloin that smokes before him.

In his own principles of gastronomy, such a butler is a Pagan. He dresses the salad to be eaten at seven, early in the afternoon, and places it in a sunny window in company with the Sauterne and Moselle, which he is careful not to put into the wine-coolers till the last minute; and in the frostiest weather, leaves the claret to catch cold on a stone floor in a damp passage.

One of the great triumphs of his life is to pull in and out a silver watch, the size of Uncle Humphrey's clock, and announce, on the slightest retardment, that the cook is shamefully behind her time; while, should any unpunctuality on the part of Dobinson himself retard the usual dining-hour, Mr. Jobson issues his orders to "dish up," in a Stentorian voice, before the delinquent has time to give him his hat and gloves in the hall.—N.B. Be it observed that Jobson is as regularly mistered by the establishment as his master is Dobinsoned.

Fussy and consequential, his mode of bringing in the tea-things while the footman follows him with "the bubbling and loud

hissing urn," is as authoritative as the air of the President of the Council ; and there is a solid gravity in his mode of carrying round the fish-sauces at dinner, while the company are splitting their sides at some joke extracted from the last number of *Punch*, which cannot be too warmly applauded.

"Jobson is the steadiest man in the world,—Jobson is a man in whom I have implicit confidence," is Mr. Dobinson's continual certificate in favour of one whose voice is so sonorous at family prayers. Not the smallest peccadillo of the livery was he ever known to pass over. "I never heerd of such doings in a reg'lar establishment," is the grand arcanum of his form of government. The words "reg'lar establishment" have all the charm from *his* lips that the words "British Constitution" obtain in the ears of a Conservative constituency.

Next to opulence, he reverences "reg'larity,"—or rather he accepts "reg'larity" as an indication of opulence. Most people well to do in the world are "reg'lar ;"—fixed stars,—while your dashing, flashing,

smashing meteors of fashionable life glitter for a moment, and are no more seen. Mr. Jobson would not have entered the service of a stockbroker,—stockbrokers being, like captains, “casual things,”—but that Dobinson had a very good character from his last butler, as being “the most reg’lar gentleman he ever lived with,—punctooal to a second.” Without such a certificate, Mr. Jobson would not have taken him; and the butler has consequently a right to be displeased and mistrustful, when he finds the “punctooal” gentleman too late for dinner.

The butler himself being the most sedentary of created slaveys, has, of course, no indulgence for gadding. The coachman must drive to thrive, the footman flies to rise. But the family butler remains fixed in the family mansion from week’s end to week’s end, like a gold fish in its globe.

The utmost extent of air-taking in which he can indulge, is by keeping the street-door open, with respectful deference, till the carriages of departing visitors have reached the angle of the square; the ut-

most stretch of sociability he is able to enjoy, consists in a game of cribbage with some brother butler of a next-door neighbour, when the Dobinsons dine out, or visit the theatre.

Even then, his companionability is of far from a cheerful nature. Habitual taciturnity has fixed its gripe upon him. His voice is modified so as to give short answers to his master, and long reprimands to the livery ; and when Mr. Corkscrew, of No. 45, discusses with him a glass of stiff punch and the state of the times, he expands mechanically into murmurs ; complains that Dobinson " is a prying fellow, as wants to do the gentleman," and " ministers shirkin' fellows as wants to do the people." Conviviality only renders him grumphier and grumphier. John or Thomas is gay in his small-beer. But the butler remains sullen in his punch ; fancying, perhaps, that a dogged humour is the nearest approach to sobriety.

A booziness, become almost constitutional, is his sole guarantee against committing himself by overt acts of ebriety. The man who is never quite sober, rarely

becomes quite drunk. It is in vain that the Johns and Thomases who smart under his pragmatismal jurisdiction, flatter themselves that, some day or other, Mr. Jobson and the coffee-tray will tumble together into the drawing-room, after a dinner party for which a dozen of wine has been decanted, with the usual butlerian diminutions. His accustomed minuet-step becomes only somewhat more of a *pas grave* for the wine he has swallowed ; and their own transgressions lie as much exposed as ever to jobation, or rather, Jobson-ation.

“I should like to know, Thomas, when you ever saw *me* overtaken by liquor in a manner unbecoming a reg’lar family !” is still his cry ; to say nothing of the more private lectures he bestows upon a young Cherubino of a Dobinsonian page, convicted of saying soft things to the under nursery-maid over the iron-spiked palings of the square ; for Mr. J. “never *heerd* of such doings in a reg’lar family.”

By dint of tears shed over family sermons on Sunday afternoons, and plausibility all the week and all the year round, Mr. Jobson

gradually comes to be regarded as the Lord Angelo of family butlers. Dobinson himself stands in awe of his virtue and sobriety, —as a man “that wouldn’t wrong his employers of a penny,” or admit “an appetite rather to bread than stone.”

Even when, one fine day, a faded, ragged, middle-aged woman brings to the area-gate a Jobsonian miniature, and when refused a trifling sum to furnish an apprentice-fee for the poor half-starved lad, is provoked into enlarging upon the backslidings of the highly respectable man in blue broadcloth and black silk stockings at a period when his round shoulders were graced with tags, and his silken hose were of white cotton, her charges are dismissed as frivolous and vexatious by Mrs. Dobinson’s prim visaged lady’s-maid, and by Mrs. Dobinson’s self.

In vain does the miserable woman produce duplicates of silver forks, alleged by the butler to have been lost by careless footmen; or silver spoons, for the disappearance of which suspicious kitchen-maids have been dismissed. Dobinson has unlimited faith in his family butler. The vile-

woman has evidently been suborned to belie him. Jobson is such an attached creature—Jobson is such an excellent man! It would be impossible for the household to go on “reg’larly” but for the superintendence of Jobson.

Jobson is consequently voted impeccable, and the wicked woman conveyed to the station-house. As certain bankers continue to be the most upright, honourable, and confidential men in the city, till the morning after the appearance of their names in the Gazette, so does the respectable butler continue to be respectable so long as he is able to keep his footing, and take thought what his master shall eat, what his master shall drink, and wherewithal he shall be clothed. The key-stone of the domestic arch, his services are indispensable to keep the family “reg’lar.”

The butler of Grosvenor Square, on the other hand, provided there be neither house steward nor groom of the chambers over him to check his aspiring genius, is a more airy character than his eastern collaborator. Unless in archiepiscopal, episcopal, or very

ancient Tory families of the aristocracy, elderly butlers, like old china, are out of date. Bonzes and josses went out with the Regency ; and young servants and modern porcelain came in with Reform.

Even an old nurse is obsolete, unless in the form of a privy-councillor, a K.G.B., or a Welsh judge ; and the fashionable butler is often on the sunny side of thirty ; a man having too much regard for his complexion to infringe upon the wine-cellar, and too much interest in his own slimness to vulgarise on ale. An occasional glass of claret and sip of liqueur suffices the well-bred gentleman, who prides himself upon the graceful air with which he precedes the Marchioness, with noiseless step and unembarrassed respiration ; and keeps his shape carefully within compass of that of his lord and master, so as to enable him to make suit-able arrangements with his lordship's valet for his cast off wardrobe.

The Whittingham of Grosvenor Square would not be mistered for the world ! Mister is, in fact, a name unfamiliar in " his lordship's establishment ;" and the

extremely gentlemanly gentleman, in Wellington boots or varnished pumps, who walks a-tiptoe, like Diomed, to announce his master's guests, would be disgusted to find himself thus conspicuously plebeianised.—“Ask Whittingham!” “Go to Whittingham!” carries with it a sort of confidential familiarity from the lips of his lovely lady, which makes him hold it more ennobling than the Guelphic order.

In lieu of the Times and John Bull, Whittingham reads the Morning Post and Court Journal; and is deeply versed in fashionable novels. In such a place as *his*, the porter being sole respondent at the door during her ladyship's absence, Whittingham, having his afternoons to himself, divides them between his toilet, light literature, flirting with the French maid, compounding scandal with my lord's own man, and wondering how people can have the impertinence to send in bills, except at Christmas.

Not that he allows anything in the shape of a small account to molest his

lord or lady. Whittingham knows better than to make himself disagreeable to his employers by appearing with a narrow slip of paper in his hand. Standing accounts, such as those of the Marquis, are, like the Marquis's peerage, of too old a date to be trifled with. No chance of percentage from *them*; and they are accordingly placed in a drawer in the hall-table till the end of the season, when the porter uses them to light his fires through the winter. It is only through the vulgar medium of the Post that claimants on a fashionable Marquis have a chance of obtaining attention between the month of January and the December next ensuing.

The Grosvenor Square butler is as trip-some in wit as in demeanour,—something of a conversation-man. All that is best of the *bon mots* of the clubs descends through *him* from his lordship's lips to the second table; and he is careful to convey to my lady's woman the earliest intelligence of a clever debate, an interesting division, or a change of ministry.

Whittingham is almost as much a fixture, however, as Mr. Jobson. Saving that he has the use of his lordship's stall at the Opera during Ascot or Goodwood week, he indulges in no vulgar dissipations ; and wonders, with an air of fastidiousness admirably copied from that of my lady, how people can show their face in the park.—A smart politician, Whittingham piques himself upon conservatism. He admits that “Melbourne is a gentlemanly fellow.” But he cannot stand coalition with that vulgar brute, O'Connell, and abhors the word retrenchment. The fashionable world, *he* thinks, has been a lost case since the curtailment of the pension-list ; and he sadly fears his Lord will live to rue the day he intrusted his proxy to a liberal administration.

Whittingham is too well bred to be on uneasy terms with any one residing under his lordship's roof.—But if an antipathy *could* ruffle the surface of so smooth a nature, it would be against Florimond, the French cook.—He really

cannot stand Monsieur Florimond. How is the subordination of the cellar to be kept up, with a cook who insists upon champagne to boil hams and stew kidneys, — Chably for his truffles and salmon, — and mulled claret for himself; besides cutting out the butler with Mademoiselle Amélie, and the stall at the Opera!—

Whittingham has no intention of growing grey or corpulent in service. Though the nature of his lordship's pursuits at Crockford's and Newmarket is such as to render the profits of his house unworthy mention, (unless a hundred a year from the wine-merchant, added to the butler's wages of seventy guineas, should be deemed sufficient to enable him to lay by for the benefit of younger children,) he has perfect reliance upon being properly provided for by my Lord.—A small place in the Household will be the very thing for him; something enabling him to wear ruffles and a sword by his side on gala days, as a fringe on the hem of royalty. As to the Customs, Excise, or Post-office,

he would "beg to decline."—Whittingham has always been used to the society of gentlemen.

How different are these specimens of the family butler from the ancient serving-man of the old English gentleman,—the *bouteillier* or butler, who presided over the *paneterie*, or pantry; who bottled his master's sherrissack or Malvoisie for his master's drinking, instead of his own;—and brewed his master's ale, not only for his own drinking, but for the refreshment of all having claims on his master's hospitality;—who took genuine pride in the coals and blankets distributed to the poor;—wept tears of joy when an heir was born to the family, and tears of sorrow when its elders were borne to the grave. The heir was *his*,—the ale was *his*,—as one might guess by the tenderness with which he dealt with both.

His voice was never heard in chiding, save when some excess on the part of his master had brought on a fit of the gout,—or some imprudence on the part

of his lady boded ill to her nurslings. With *him*, service was inheritance. He knew that the children to come after him would be dear to the children to come after his master ; and for the general sake, as for the sake of conscience, his master's substance was sacred in his sight.

Such a butler was necessarily the head of a peaceable and well governed household. It is true he was a dunce. In *his* time, newspapers, daily or weekly, were unthumbed in the pantry ; and, as to troubling himself about what was doing in the House, he regarded Parliament only as a solemn portion of Church and State, to be toasted at public dinners, and prayed for in parish churches, but not to be profaned by lips unclean.

But the wine he bottled was sounder, and the ale he brewed ripened more readily, than in these our times. In table-service, his attendance was impartial. He was not a bit more obsequious to my Lord, the country neighbour, than to the needy hanger-on of the family ; or, if a

difference of assiduity *were* perceptible, it was simply in favour of the parson of the parish.

But, alas! "the gods are departing;" and stout old-fashioned serving-men seem also on the go. It is puzzling to decide what has become of them; whether they have gone into the reformed parliament, or the church, or the almshouse.—But, unless in the pages of Richardson or Steele, it is exceedingly difficult to meet with even the prototype of a comfortable FAMILY BUTLER.

THE FRENCH COOK.

THE name of French Cook conveys to the popular mind the image of a lean and shrivelled individual in a white nightcap and apron, speaking broken English, and inflicting broken meat, frogs, and other filthiness, upon the Earl, his master, at the rate of three or four hundred guineas per annum.

The French cook, in the highest sense of the word, is a well-dressed, well-mannered gentleman, who stands behind her Majesty's or his Grace's chair during dinner, stirring a smoking sauce in a silver tureen ; after having appeared for an hour in the kitchen before dinner, with a napkin under his chin, and a gold spoon in his hand, to taste and pronounce upon the gravies and other condiments prepared by his subordinates, according to his manifesto of the early morn.

Such a man was Carême, such Ude, such Francatelli; such, doubtless, the Vatel, whose name is as immortal in the records of gastronomic art, as that of Racine or Molière in the dramatic.

An artist of this description is an individual not to be lightly treated of; a cook of this description is a distinguished man. It is only in England that he is degraded by the antediluvian name of cook. In France he is called the *CHEF*, like the head of any other department,—“*chef de bureau*,”—“*chef d'escadron*,”—“*chef d'opéra*,”—“*chef de cuisine*.” In England, the only chief we recognise is the Commander of her Majesty's armies at the Horse Guards; and to talk of the chief of the kitchen would have a Mohican or Narraganseth sound, savouring of the wigwam.

Nevertheless, there is something ennobling in the word. “Tell the cook,” or “tell the *chef*,” are as different as prose and poetry. A mere “cook” would never have worn point ruffles, or fallen on the point of his sword, like the great Vatel; or have lost his place in the royal kitchen

from an over-sensitive temperament, like the Francatelli of the present day. We have little doubt that the honourable distinctions conveyed in the word "*chef*," have engendered more capital *entrées* than the pages of Brillat, Savarin, or Grimod de la Reynière.

The English are notoriously the most backward of civilized nations in the art of cookery. The profession does not obtain sufficient honour in Great Britain. We treat a great artist of the gastronomic department, as we would treat any other menial, without reflecting that a first-rate cook *must* be a man of genius ; a man combining the inventive and combinative faculties in no ordinary degree ; a man of almost poetical temperament, yet of prompt judgment, and untirable activity of body and mind.

Such advantages do not occur united half-a-dozen times in a century. A Carême is as rare as a Malibran, a Taglioni, a Rossini. The rejoinder, which has been successively assigned to a score of men of genius in the course of the last five hundred

years, from Hans Holbein to Pacchierotti, when "sprighted" by some saucy lordling with messages from Court, "Tell the King, your master, that he may make a dozen nobles by the breath of his mouth, but that there is but one Holbein," might very properly be reiterated by certain modern *chefs*, who have been treated as lightly, or rather as heavily, in royal households, as if any other member thereof were capable of compounding a *bisque d'écrévisses* !

The consequence of this disparagement is, that the greatest cooks of the age prefer almost any foreign service to that of an English family. The good and great refrain from our shores, and the cheap and nasty inundate our contaminated kitchens. Secure in our almost savage ignorance of the principles of his art, the *trousse-poulet*, or scullion of a French establishment makes his appearance in London, in a velvet waistcoat and gilt guard-chain, with a certificate bearing the name of a Russian prince, purchased for half-a-crown of an *écrivain public* ; on the strength of which, he is instantly engaged, at a salary of a

hundred guineas a year, (instead of the kicks and broken victuals he has been receiving for wages at some eating-house on the Boulevards) to poison the frequenters of some fashionable club or coffee-house ; who, in their disgust at his villanous performances, fall back upon the everlasting joint or boiled fowl of their ancestors, and go roast-beefing and plum-pudding it to their graves.

John Bull is never weary of declaring that he detests "kickshaws," i. e., the "*quelques choses*," by which French scullions generalize the hard names of the *entrées* they presume to murder ; because he possesses in his national bill of fare two or three dishes of unequalled merit, —the lordly haunch of venison, the sirloin of beef, the saddle of mutton, the green goose, to say nothing of turtle in all its savoury varieties,—viands excellent after their kind, for the ravenous maw of a debater or a fox-hunter.

But it is by this blind and positive rejection of alimentary civilization, that London perpetuates the unwholesome crudities of

its kitchen. *Probatia est.* Is there a capital under the sun that groans louder under the torture of its indigestions? — Is there a population that insults the eyes of Europe more revoltingly by its advertisements of aperitives?

Roast mutton and apple-pie are in fact a matter of necessity in our cookless country; and our self-love is glad to make a virtue of necessity. Charcoal is a costly thing in our diminutive and deforested island. We dine without soup, because we know not how to make it, except as an article of luxury; and prefer an unsightly chop to a savoury cutlet, simply because the chop is most come-at-able. But it puts a fair face on the nakedness of the land to affect a contempt for “kickshaws.”

That the “plain roast and boiled,” in which we pretend to delight, are, in truth, anything but delightful, may be attested by the multiplicity of Chili vinegar and Cayenne pepper, soys, ketchups, sauces, King of Oude’s, Harvey’s, Reading, Lopresti’s, and other British compounds, with whose astringent juices we vitrify the coats

of our stomachs, to enable them to retain our daily rations of tasteless fish, flesh, and fowl, instead of having them suitably prepared for table.

The plainest of our plain cooks cannot suffer a poor innocent chicken to come to table without deluging it in parsley and butter; and fennel sauce, or melted butter tasting of smoke and the flour-tub, fill our sauce-boats with eternal shame, and prove us to be only advanced a stage beyond the savageness of our hip-haw-and-acorn-cramming forefathers.

Of all cooking animals, in short, the Englishman is by intuition the least expert, and by indocility, the least improvable. An exotic master is indispensable in order to subdue his natural tendency to exaggeration, and soften the insensitive harshness of the northern palate.

Still, this is not matter for despair. Twenty years ago, when the Horticultural Society was not, our gardens were reduced to an humble show of mignonette, scarlet lychnis, and ten-weeks' stocks, instead of the brilliant sprinkling of calceolarias,

pelargoniums, and coreopses, which now brighten the parterre. Twenty years ago, when the Zoological Society was not, our juveniles knew not, save by effigy, to distinguish a bison from a tapir; and believed in the existence of the cameleopard, as we believe in the Apocalypse—by faith. And why may not the perceptions of a succeeding generation be improved as regards the flesh-pots of Great Britain, by the establishment of a Gastronomic Society? For one man who cares to look at a pied pheasant, there are ten thousand who love a well-roasted one; and in the opinion of the many, not all the orchideous plants or rose-bushes lectured upon by Professor Lindley, vie in importance with the naturalization of a single edible root or leguminous novelty. Say, excellent John Bull! a new hyacinth, or a new potato?—"Speak, or die!" Why, an' thou speak the truth, thou wouldst not give a potato for a whole wilderness of hyacinths!

It is easy for the great ones of Great Britain,—rejoicing in their three courses and dessert prepared by a French cook, English roaster, and Italian confectioner,—

assert, and with truth, that better dinners are given in London than in any capital in Europe. With Romney Marsh, the South Downs, and our domestic parks for pastures,—with the circumjacent sea for our fish-course,—and the colonies for our spice-box,—how can it be otherwise? But the greatest number, whose happiness, social and political, has at length become a matter of consideration,—the greatest number, who are compelled, by the plainness of their cooks, to a daily diet of crude meat, tasteless vegetables, and doughy pastry,—to tough and scorched chops, with the indigestible horrors of an apple dumpling,—are deeply interested in the promotion of a science which, by making tender the food of man, in the sequel makes tender his heart. We conscientiously believe that half the obdurate parents and brutal husbands of middle life, are produced by the cold meat and pickles of their anti-gastrophilic propensities.

Let the education committees look to it! It were a far more philosophical exercise of humanity to enable “the foolish fat scul-

lions" of this ill-fed empire, to compound good wholesome soup out of a modicum of meat and vegetables, and to give to the universal potato salt, savour, and digestibility by the simplest of processes, than perplex them by rules of arithmetic, or superfluous delicacy of orthography.

It is disgusting to think in what Hottentot ignorance these poor creatures are at present reared for a calling which, properly refined and appreciated, enables a mere mortal to provide a banquet worthy of the gods. Among *us* a cook is as unconscious of the sacredness of his or her calling, as if they were no higher in the scale of domestic life than a burnisher of plate, or sweeper of cobwebs. But between a footman or housemaid, and the individual whose good or evil service influences the health and comfort, nay, prolongs or curtails the life of the family, how vast a step !

The neglect or malefactions of the cook may injure the innermost man of the most illustrious,—whether his or her master, or the guest of his or her master ; and the errors of a Chancery judgment, or a breakdown in parliament, have been caused

before now by the half-raw vegetables of a spring soup, or the crudity of an ill-boiled cod's head and shoulders ;—a matter of serious consideration for the legislative wisdom of the country.

In the education of the French *chef*, on the contrary, a thousand fortuitous advantages combine. If less catechised or belaboured with the rule of three than our unhappy youths in crumpet-caps and yellow worsted stockings, the French starveling who is father to the French cook, is schooled from his earliest childhood in the mysteries of the fine-arts, by admittance gratis to all the public exhibitions, and a variety of courses of public lectures. At the Louvre, his eye becomes habituated to the glorious forms of antiquity : and even if too idle to attend the public School of Design, he grows insensibly impressed by harmonies of shape and colour. On public festivals, he is admitted gratis to the theatres ; and at the opera, acquires a taste for music, dancing, and the classics. His tone of mind becomes gradually refined, his powers of invention awakened.

His daily lounge is the Palais Royal ;

where, at the provision shops of Chevet or Corcellet, he gazes upon the Perigord pie, the truffled turkey, the *poularde* delicate as the cheek of beauty ; the glistening carp, the speckled salmon-trout, the ferocious lobster, the picturesque roebuck, the tender asparagus, the melting ortolan, the rosy teal, the red-legged partridge, the luxurious mullet ; with an endless cornucopia of figs, dates, oranges, and pine-apples, standing among stores of olives, capons, and the crisp white *nougat* of the sweet south.

As the sculptor foresees his *chef-d'œuvre* in the shapeless block of marble, the future *chef* foresavours his courses in this gastronomic medley. In the windows of Véfour, Véry, the *Frères Provençaux*, the Café de Perigord, he notes and criticises their buffet of *pâté de foie gras*, cray-fish, Brittany butter, cutlets of *pré salé* crumbed for the fire,—larks marshalled on their little silver-spits,—or *beccafichi*, rolled in their vine-leaves.

There does he pause and ponder ! There do the thick-coming fancies of genius inspire his mind ! There is nothing nearer

akin to a great poet, than a great gastronome: their faculties of invention being destined to promote the happiness of the million, while themselves are a-hungred or in despair. We are inclined to place the creators of a *suprême de volaille*, and of *Paradise Lost*, in nearly the same category of exalted beings.

And is such a man as this to be abased to the menialities of the servants' hall, or even of the steward's room? In France, the royal *chef, porte l'épée au côté*, and is a man of honour. In England, the Queen's *maître d'hôtel*, who is also head cook, wears an official carving-knife. Such weapons should be chivalrously sacred!—The Board of Green Cloth has no right to deal with them as with the vulgar throng of lackey kind.—The Board of Green Cloth should recal to mind the cruel destinies of Correggio, the most exquisite of painters, weighed down by royal humiliation unto the grave.

In France, the memory of *le grand Vatel* is as familiarly talked of as "*le grand Sully*," or "*Louis le Grand*." The story

of the said great Vatel is pretty well known among us. Nevertheless the last English translation of Madame de Sévigné's letters gives so *ignorantissimé* a version of the matter as to deserve comment.

Vatel was cook to the Prince de Condé ; and on the intimation of Louis the Fourteenth that the Court would spend a few days with his trusty and well-beloved cousin at his palace of Chantilly, twenty miles from Paris, the great man read in the announcement of this royal visit his brevet of immortality.

To Chantilly, accordingly, repaired the Court ; and though his Majesty was observed to eat, drink, and sleep there during the first four-and-twenty hours entirely to his royal satisfaction, the tender honour of Vatel was wounded to the quick on perceiving that, at the first day's dinner, the first course was second-rate ; and that at the table of the ladies of honour, two roasts were deficient !

The unfortunate *chef* slept not that fatal night ! It was in vain that the chamberlain of the Prince de Condé, as well as the

comptroller of the King's household, assured him nothing could be more admirable than his arrangements—nothing more exquisite than his *entrées*;—that the King had eaten with appetite, and praised with dignity. The sensitive Vatel wrung his hands, and refused to be comforted!—Two roasts had been wanting!

By daybreak he was at his post,—inspecting the progress of preparations for the royal breakfast. But with a countenance expressive of bitter anguish and unsolaceable remorse, he was heard to inquire repeatedly of the clerk of the kitchen and his legion of myrmidons, or *marmitons*, whether “the *marée* had arrived?”

“The *marée*?” quoth the English translator; “what on earth is the *marée*?”—and turning to the dictionary, finds that *marée* bears the interpretation of “tide—flux and reflux of the sea.” Scarcely conceiving it possible that the flux and reflux of the sea could have been expected by the night-coach at Chantilly, he consequently gravely assures us that Vatel was heard inquiring on all sides whether “the *salt water* were arrived!”

“ His subordinates,” continues our translator, “ answered him in the affirmative, and showed him a small portion of salt water, forwarded from Dieppe, without being aware that a similar quantity of salt water was to be forwarded from each of the fishing towns of La Manche.”

The agonized *chef* was now reduced to despair; under the influence of which, as it is only too well known, he retired to his own chamber, exclaiming that his honour was irretrievably tarnished,—fell upon his sword,—and EXPIRED !—

And all this, according to our English translation of the works of Sévigné, for the sake of a little “ salt water !”—“ *Et voilà comme on écrit l'histoire !*”

It need not, of course, be suggested to our accomplished readers, that *marée* is the general designation of fish, according to the idiom of the kitchen. It was fast-day; and Vatel, conceiving himself condemned to a wretched brill and a few whittings, instead of the miraculous draught of turbot and mullets on which he had foreseen occasion to exercise his art, unwilling to survive his humiliation, precipitated himself out

of the “ frying-pan into the fire,” and became immortal as Encelades !—

This was a fault. This was dying like Correggio, or dying like Keats. It may have been great for a great cook to fall at the instigation of wounded honour ; but it would have been greater to have lived and extended the buckler, or saucepan cover of genius, over his scars.

Carême, Ude, nay, even Francatelli, would have rushed to the *piscinium* of Chantilly ; and, snatching forth its grey carp, voracious pike, or speckled trout, converted *them* into turbot and lobster sauce. Nay, we are by no means certain that one, at least, of the three would not have made a sweetbread figure to perfection as a dish of mullets *en papillote* ; or caused a turkey poult to assume the form of a cod’s head and shoulders !

But in the times of Louis le Grand the science was in its infancy. Substitutes and *ambigus* were not ; and Vatel lost his life for a turbot.

By the way, though the science of the *casseroles* was in its leading strings, we very

much doubt whether that of the confectioner were not then at years of discretion. The long minority of Louis the Fourteenth probably rendered the cultivation of the art of confection the most delicate courtiership of the epoch, as at the present day in Madrid.

From his infancy to his old age, Louis was addicted to *bonbons*; and the fêtes given upon his marriage,—when a temple of love was erected in the centre of the royal gardens, to which there was access by four avenues of exquisite trees, the abundant fruits pendent whereon were preserved, or candied, or *fac-similes* of sugar, producing, by the light of thousands of lamps glaring among the leaves, a more than magical effect,—have found no rivalship in modern times. But alas! between Colbert the gorgeous, and Guizot the prudential, there exists the unfathomable gulf produced by a couple of revolutions!

To return to our cooks—(for from the ridiculous to the sublime there is but a paragraph!)—to return from cabinet ministers to cooks, the French cook, as he

exists in England, is usually some ambitious man, some Thiers of the frying pan, who, with a view to his own aggrandizement and expansion from *sous-chef* into *chef*, expatriates himself, and submits to become smoke-dried as a rein-deer's tongue, as well as to be divorced from his beloved opera, and *Boulevards*.

Arrived in London, he is enchanted with all he beholds. The shops of Grove, of Fortnum, of Giblett, of Fisher, fill his soul with new conceptions of the good things of this world. All sorts and conditions of edibles seem prepared for his hand. It appears only necessary to exclaim,

Fire burn, and caldron bubble,

for Fentum's stoves to convert a well-filled larder into a capital dinner.

By degrees, however, the enthusiasm of the new comer declines ; for he finds that he begets no enthusiasm in return. The influence of the climate is oppressive to his faculties, while the gross ignorance of his master humiliates his wounded feelings. He is unappreciated, unpraised, unrewarded,—save by his salary. The un-

punctuality of the English is martyrdom to a cook of genius. He provides a hot dinner for half-past seven, to be eaten cold at half-past eight. His *soufflés* fall heavy on his soul. His viands lose their flavour, their elasticity, their complexion; and if souls so magnanimous as that of Vatel still existed in the regions of the spit, there would probably be half a dozen inquests per season, upon gentlemen of his calling, wounded in their sense of honour by the failure of their dinners.

In half the best English houses, the *entrées* are mere matters of show; and the simple roaster stands accordingly higher in the favour of his master, than the most accomplished cook. Even when eaten, they are misunderstood. The influence of our climate, and the early use of the fiery wines of the Peninsula, produce a serious injury to the palate. While still in our non-age, Cayenne pepper, Chili vinegar, and soy, have sapped the very foundations of our gastronomic morality. For the palate of the *gourmand* may become as *blasé* as the soul of a *roué*.

It is for the depraved appetites of such men, that the French cook has to play his fantastic tricks;—to devil chickens, and pepper partridges,—nay, to pepper wood-cocks!—The pure and transparent gravies of France are insufficient to provoke the jaded appetites of those who have begun life with curry, or a dressed wild duck. By the time a French cook has been three seasons in London, his principles are subverted. He no longer knows how to distinguish right from wrong. His chief business is to make his dinner look well on the table.

His life in the household, meanwhile, is a wretched one. He finds himself an object of universal mistrust. “Those wretches of foreigners,” or “that cursed French fellow,” are terms which resound daily in his ears; and *he* is unluckily a better linguist than the translator of Madame de Sévigné.

Since the Courvoisierian catastrophe, this evil has increased. But from time immemorial; the French cook has been as much a matter of disgust in every aristocratic establishment, as the royal confessor

in the days of the Stuarts. The vulgar mind of Great Britain is imbued with prejudices, and delights in perversion. The servants' hall is sure to call every foreigner a spy, and a Jesuit; though what is purported by the charge, it would be sorely puzzled to explain. While the hapless tosser-up of omelets is as guiltless of religion or politics as a New Zealander, they hate him, because he is "outlandish,"—because "Wellington beat the French at Waterloo;"—or, in point of fact, because the French beat the English over a charcoal fire, as thoroughly as the English the French by the fire that produces another kind of stew, and is characteristic of another order of broil.

The French cook is, in short, the Pariah of the household. Unless the diamond shirt-studs and varnished boots in which he sallies forth to the Opera have captivated the heart of the under housemaid, not a creature under his master's roof but regards him as a species of evil spirit,—a man who would poison for hire, if he did not receive higher wages as a *chef de cuisine*.

The only houses where these unfortunate individuals obtain any ascendancy are the clubs and hotels. *There* their activity, their adroitness, their powers of combination, become invaluable. Aboriginal men-cooks of some excellence are to be met with in such establishments; but it is now recognised that, though we produce general officers, the field-marshal of a first-rate kitchen *must* be of Gallic blood, and born with pretensions to the *cordons bleu*.

But it is also in such establishments they presume furthest upon the unsusceptibility of an English palate. There is an anecdote on record, that the inestimable *chef* of one of the first London coffee-houses,—nay, the *very* first,—once bargained, day after day, with a celebrated Bond Street fishmonger, for a turbot which, at the close of the week, became “a filthy bargain.”

Still the artist persisted in inquiring after that “dom foine feesh!”

“It is good for nothing now,” replied the fishmonger.

“Well, if you trow him away, give him to me.”

“Willingly,” said the good-humoured tradesman, “on condition that you tell me what you intend to do with it.”

“*Ma foi*, I make him a sauce twice as nashty as himself, and de foine shentlemen vill call him *dom foine*!”

Let it not be supposed that the *chef* was to blame in this. If he had not found hundreds of customers prepared to be made fools of, he would not have attempted to make them fools.

The virtues of the French cook are sobriety, activity, and zeal. A first-rate *artiste* is supported in the discharge of his duties by his own *amour-propre*. He glories in his calling, and feeling capable of providing the nectar and ambrosia of the gods, turns with loathing from the vulgar potables of London. He is never tired, never sullen;—passionate, and tyrannical with his *subs.*, like most great potentates,—but never sullen. Ude is said to have boasted that but one Ude and one Napoleon adorn a century,—probably from inward consciousness of affinity between the genius of the two.

But, though by vocation tyrants, great cooks seldom arise under the dominion of great despots. It is under the sway of *les rois fainéans*, that the stewpan is seen to flourish. Under George IV. and Louis XVIII. gigantic strides were made in the science of gastronomy ; under Napoleon and Louis Philippe, reckless bolters of their food, cookery loses a cubit of her stature ; while, under Victoria, the anything but *fainéante* Queen, Francatelli, the Coriolanus of Pimlico, was banished the royal kitchen !

It would not much surprise us if, in the sequel of these reforming times, the white nightcap should be altogether Joseph Humed out of the palace gates ; and some hideous Mrs. Glasse, or detestable Mrs. Rundell, be found presiding over the *ragoûts* of Majesty. As sure as two and two make four, future travellers will come to the stately furnaces and stoves of Windsor Castle, and cry aloud,—“ Where is the French cook ? ” and echo will reply, in a plaintive voice,—“ *Where* is the FRENCH COOK ! ”

THE BODY-COACHMAN.

A STATE-COACHMAN is one of the most prominent embodyings of the national character that presents itself to the naked eye in the metropolis.

John Bull, as formerly typified,—John Bull,—portly, rubicund, spruce, yet easy in his garments,—jovial, yet sober enough to avoid running against a post,—mulish, and apt to resent upon the animals under his lash, the wiggings he receives from his master or missus,—John Bull is scarcely to be met with at this present writing, in this land of anti-corn-law associations, unless seated in state upon a laced hammercloth.

With lustrous, rosy, and whiskerless face, round as a Nonsuch apple,—a Falstaff in livery,—a waist beyond all bounds, and a pair of calves such as

might belong to the dun cow of the Earl of Warwick,—the state-coachman of Majesty or the Lord Mayor, often boasts a presence whose dignity might become the woolsack. We do not mean profanely to compare these heads of the coaching department with the speakers of the Upper House ; or to opine how far in either case the wisdom may reside in the wig. But we confess that if, according to a great authority, “ Kings themselves are only ceremonies,” we are apt to fall into the error of regarding Lord Chancellors and State Coachmen as a main portion of the pomp and circumstance of the British constitution.

In one respect, the assimilation holds especially good. No man is pre-ordained for a Chancellor or a State Coachman. Lesser men are born great. But the greatness of *these* great men,—that is, the greatness of one of them, and the bigness of the other,—is an achievement of their own. The body-coachman, like the Chancellor, is *filis de ses œuvres*. The works of the one consisting in stuffing,—the other in cramming. The one imbibes ale,—the other

Hale ; and between repletion of body and fulness of knowledge, both swell into public distinction.

It is worthy of Dogberry to assert that reading and writing come by nature, but that to be a personable man is the gift of Providence. The same dispensation that gives to the body-coachman the abdominal protuberance becoming his box,—assigns to the lawyer the crooked and crannyfied brain, qualifying him for the torture of the witness-box.

A thin coachman is as anomalous an object in nature, as a dwarf generalissimo, or a thick rope-dancer. Unless his face be labelled to serve as a certificate of the merit of his master's home-brewed, and his figure emulate the form of the butt that contains it, he is unworthy of his cloth,—*i. e.* his hammercloth. The state-coachman should be a man above the world, in other respects besides his coach-box ; care-proof, and inaccessible to all diseases save gout or dropsy. He should be high as the monument, and solid as St. Paul's.

It is clear, therefore, that such a voca-

tion announces at once one of the happiest and best of mankind. The same qualities that ought to recommend a man to the attention of a chapter, in a *congé d'élire*, must clearly influence every discreet nobleman in the choice of a body-coachman. Though like other blades valued for temper and sharpness, his real excellence consists in the almost holy serenity of soul which causes his face to shine like that of the sun in an almanack ; and the crimson doublet buttoned over his paunch, to resemble a well-stuffed red velvet ottoman, bordered with gold.

A remarkable transition in the history of coaching life, was that which metamorphosed a certain Joe Tims, from being shoe-black to a preparatory school, into the twenty-stone Jehu of the beautiful Countess of — ; he, whose snowy wig at the last drawing-room emulated the snow-clad summit of Mont Blanc ; and whose goodly legs describe the segment of an ellipsis whereof the bases are never less than two feet asunder.

The Durham ox, seated on a hammer-

cloth upon its beam-ends, arrayed in a livery by Stulz, would scarcely display a more substantial form and pressure. If, as it is asserted, the state-coachman of the Emperor of Russia must be always a general, our friend, Joe Tims—we ask pardon, *Mister* Tims—clearly deserves to be a field-marshal!

Who could have thought it!—I never look down upon him from my attic window as the natty *vis-à-vis* of her ladyship bowls along the street, with its lustrous panels and aristocratic decorations, its pair of noble horses before, full of spirit, action, and blood, and its pair of ignoble asses behind, all tags and lace, subjection and sauciness, with Tims, square and pompous, on his flowing hammercloth, with Atlantean shoulders, and toes pointed East and West,—like Old Spain, with a footing in either hemisphere,—without recalling to mind the little red-headed scamp whose *summum bonum* of youthful happiness was to gnaw a raw turnip on a gate-post!

Yet let it not be supposed that Tims's ascent from *that* post to his present was by a hop, skip, and jump.

“ Oh ! who can tell how hard it is to climb ” to the lofty prominence of a box of any distinction !—“ There are two ways,” says the sage, “ of attaining the apex of a pyramid,—that of the eagle, who stoops to it from the skies,—that of the reptile, who crawls up to it from the earth.” Let the judgment of the public decide upon Joe Tims’s mode of achieving Jehu-dicial greatness.

Marvellous was the ugliness of the boy Tims, father to the man Tims, at twelve years old : that is, not so much the ugliness as the diminutiveness. Those who wished to investigate his pigmy features felt disposed to promote him to the point of a needle ; not as one of the dancing angels described by casuists, but in order to insert him under the reflection of a microscope. He was an orphan, charity fed ; and we all know how the parochial “ charity that feedeth the hungry ” feedeth orphans. If the Providence that nourishes the young ravens be equally sparing in their diet, it may account for the rarity of old ravens in the ornithological world.

Joe was, in short, kept as near the boun-

daries of starvation as might set at nought a verdict of infanticide ; and he might have been weighed in the balance against a full-grown barn-door fowl (*not* fed on charity), and found wanting. The little fellow, however was born for future greatness—or bigness ; and lived on, as a boy of ten, despite of beadle and churchwardens.

It was while awaiting his apprenticeship that Joe became henchman to seventy other boys, nearly as ragged and as hungry as himself. He was what is called to “work for his victuals” till the chimney-sweeper had a vacancy ; and these victuals were of even a lower nature than those commonly called “broken.” They might have been called “smashed ;” — for potatoe-peelings and egg-shells had their share in the hell-broth brewed for the parish-boy.

At length Joe Tims did what any other sensible young man would have done in the same situation—he ran away. Hunger is said to eat through stone-walls. Hunger ate through the patience of poor Joe, leaving him nothing to eat in return. But though it be proverbially said, that “he

who runs may read," it does not follow that he who runs may eat. All that Joe Tims got by running was, thinner than ever.

Arrived in the great Babylon, Joe Tims followed the example of Wisdom, and cried in the streets ; and, as in the case of Wisdom, " no man regarded." Those who, seeing him seated on a door-step, with his exiguous frame manifested through the fissures of his garments, learned on interrogating the truant that he was " an unfortunate lad out of place," thought him very much out of place indeed ; and bestowed upon him the gratuity proverbially said to be the allowance of a race to which, it must be admitted, he bore a strong family resemblance.

The wretched little morsel soon found that a place was as hard to find for a runaway parish apprentice, as for a sucking politician unbacked by parliamentary interest. Fair ladies do not, like Boz or Paul de Koch, take their pages from the streets. Even the small genteel families in want of an odd boy to clean knives,

seemed to consider little Joe a great deal *too* odd for them. After a week's experience as a gutterling of the fashionable world, poor Tims began to remember yearningly, not the flesh-pots of Israel—for flesh-pots he had never seen—but the broth of eggshells and potatoe-peelings, simmering so appetizingly over the kitchen-fire of the preparatory school !

There was very little left of the poor orphan but the bones, when one day a walking apothecary, much resembling him whom the facetiousness of managers usually causes to embody the outline of the needy poison-selling wretch drawn by Shakspeare in his Romeo, struck by the meagreness of the child, and perhaps conceiving that before long he might afford without much trouble of preparation a pleasing addition to his anatomical museum, proceeded to engage him as scrub ; to carry about the oil-skin covered basket, the Pandora's box, from which magnesia and rhubarb flew out daily, to the great detriment of the invalided portion of society ; leaving a small account, not like Hope, but

Despair, at the bottom !—Pills above,—bills below. —

Joe was enraptured. The sight of jars and phials in the apothecary's shop conveyed a vague idea of food ; and though, on finding that the gallipots contained only leeches and electuaries, and the phials cathartics, the charming illusion vanished from his mind, the bare imagination of a feast had done something to restore his courage.

Besides, his body was no longer as bare as his imagination. Mr. Senna, afraid perhaps of generating the cholera in his household by exposing that exiguous frame at the same moment to cold and hunger, had cut down one of his own threadbare suits into a covering for Joe ;—cut it down, *bien entendu*, as the victims of the law are cut down, when all is over with them. Threadbare, however, as was the cloth, it served him as it does the gentlemen in black when quarrelsome in their natures,—as a protection.

For those who, like a royal bulletin, are fond of “progressive improvement,” it is

a good thing to begin where Joe Tims began, in the lowest mud wherein human clay may be compelled to roll. Every step in life taken by the orphan was necessarily an advancement. The household of Mr. and Mrs. Senna, from which so many home-reared errand-boys had fled in dismay, appeared to poor Joe a land of Canaan, overflowing with milk and honey.

Though, like a lady's album, fed with scraps, the fare appeared to *him* more luxurious than the venison and turtle of the Egyptian Hall on Lord Mayor's Day. It was curious to see how his slender limbs now began, like Hermione, to "round apace." The conversion of one of Pharoah's lean kine into one of his fat ones, could not have presented a more curious contrast. Mr. Senna's opposite neighbour, the parish-clerk, who took in day-scholars, and understood the difficulty of keeping boys in their teens sleek and well-looking, was heard to whisper to a brother-scholar of the ferule, that the apothecary's errand-boy, like Mithridates, seemed to possess the art of fattening upon drugs.

Luck, which impertinent people have defined as the providence of fools, soon threw the dapper little errand-boy in the way of preferment. One of Senna's professional avocations consisted in courting the mews adjoining his dispensary. Not that he administered to man *and* beast; those who were beastly enough to swallow his medicines being invariably bipeds. But he was a great man among coachmen's wives, labouring with small families; and not a parlour on the first floor over the stables, but had its chimney-piece adorned with his labelled bottles.

It follows that, even as the boys of Dr. Caius followed their master to the field, the boy of Dr. Senna followed *his* to the rack and manger. By dint of carrying jalap and ginger to the little centaurs, Joe began to imbibe a taste for horseflesh. He had commenced life by longing after a stalled ox, and was now beginning to cast eyes of covetousness upon stalled horses; the only provender which troubled his imagination being that which disturbed the mind of Nick Bottom, in the arms of Titania—*viz.*, a

sieve of corn, and a truss of good tender hay. He was always getting chidden by old Senna for mews-ing away his time ; was apt to whistle while rubbing down ostler-wise his master's counter ; and to exclaim " Wo ho ! " to the still, instead of extracting the funnel, and suspending its operations.

One morning when, following his Houhnyhm propensities, he was as usual loitering near a stable-door, instead of proceeding with his oil-skin basket up the ladder leading to the state-apartments of some body-coachman, a certain Captain Flashdragon, who had repaired to the fountain-head, or trough-head of coachmanship, to look out for a tiger for his cab, seized him by the shoulder, and inquired whether he knew anything of horses ?

A *parvenue* ladyship of the West-end, startled by an inquiry whether she knew anything of the Patronesses of Almacks, could not have replied more deprecatingly than he " had not *much* the honour of their acquaintance ; but that he was most anxious to improve it."

Captain Flashdragon's next interrogatory

was of a still more alarming character, "And pray, my fine fellow, how would you like to be a tiger?"

Joe Tims had often been accused in earlier days of being a wolf. It had never entered into his calculations to progress into a tiger.

The nature and attributes of tigerism, however, as set forth by the gallant captain, were far from unsatisfactory. Joe, who possessed instincts of almost feline cleanliness, and whose very soul had rebelled against the filthy rags of his kittenhood, was sorely tempted by the description of the pair of snow-white tights, tops, and gloves, awaiting the legitimate tiger of a Captain Flashdragon. The natty dark-blue livery, with its short divergent skirts almost rivaling those of a beef-eater or fireman, completed the charm; and lo! he was induced to request the compounder of medicines would "provide himself," and to place himself under the measures of the captain's compounder of liveries.

In enumerating the advantages attached to the tigerhood of his establishment, the

Captain had, of course, omitted to state that the fifteen guineas per annum were paid septennially ; and that though the wages he gave were merely nominal, the cuffs were *not*. The tenderest plateful ever served at the Steaks could not have been more strenuously belaboured with the rolling-pin, than the flesh of poor Joe after jogging for a season at the rear of Flashdragon's cab.

A more demoralizing service could not have been found for the poor little bottle-imp, than that of a broken-down man about town, in times when policemen were not, and when the magistracy regarded rouge et noir as a legitimate recreation. But for a native simplicity of character, such as we have already described as leading exclusively to the wig Episcopal and Jehu-dicial, it would soon have been all dickey with the virtues of Joe !

But the cat-like cleanliness of his inward man was equal to that of his outward. From a boy, he had been able to touch pitch—and even pitch and toss—without being defiled, and when at length Flashdragon bolted for Boulogne, leaving his cab

and tiger at the mercy of society, no matter whether the Mendicity or the Zoological, Tim was still the same blameless individual who had eked out his early subsistence with sloes and crabs,—and at Senna's sweetened his dry bread with electuary, as with raspberry jam !

What a destiny.—At fifteen, on the wide world, without friends and without a character !

For once, the stature of Joe Tims stood him in stead. He was too slight to be worth pressing into a gang of housebreakers, and too tall to be shoved in through a pane of glass. He was therefore allowed to starve on, untempted.

Instinct carried him back to the Sennatorial mews, in quest of employment ; when lo ! the first news that greeted him was, that at the close of an “ unprecedentedly successful season,” (as the theatres have it,) his quondam master was setting up a gig, which the *mewsical* families under his pestle and mortar did not fail to denominate “ old Senna's influenza gig.”

A gig supposes a horse,—a horse, a

groom ; and poor Joe, sorely out of employ, and consequently out at elbows, judged it better to become once more the Lancelot Gobbo of the Old Jew. Senna was well satisfied to take him back. Joe could find his way blindfold to all his master's old patients. As mechanically as an undertaker's horse paces to the churchyard, could Tims impel the influenza gig to the doors of all the rheumatic spinsters and hypochondriac widows in the vicinity. At first, indeed, the apothecary, fired with the ambition of declaring "*l'état c'est moi !*" took it into his head to handle the ribands and brandish the whip. But a certain coachmaker's bill, the result of this wild exploit, reduced him to reason and a compound fracture at the same time ; and it appeared to be no small relief to him to discover that " Cap'n Flashdragon's tiger 'ad been in the 'abit of driving the Cap'n's vehicle," and that the ragged caitiff he had enlisted as helper, could even help to drive the Influenza !

Poor Joe was now, as formerly the physic-basket, covered with oil-skin ; oil-skin hat,—oil-skin cape, oil-skin horse-cloth for old

Peg, the influenza mare.—And well for *him* the precaution!—For hours together was it his fortune to sit at the doors of old ladies “long-a-dying,” old gentlemen reluctant to go out of the world, or young ones deliberate in coming into it. For two whole years, were he and Peg rained upon,—snowed upon,—hailed upon,—blown upon by winds from East, West, North, and South. He became as inured to storms as a weather-cock on a steeple; and it must be admitted that he looked almost as rusty.

He was now a lanky lad of eighteen,—neither man nor boy. To hold the ribands in a more elevated situation was, he knew, impossible, the very vocation of coachee presupposing the word MAN;—for who ever heard of a coach-boy, or coach-hobblede-hoy?—Joe was consequently wise enough to stick, like an adhesive plaster, to the apothecary; albeit despising him from his soul, “as a feller wot knew no more of druving than if so be he’d never ’ad a whip in his ’and!” Just as a Pombal or a Walpole may look down upon the sovereign he holds in subjection, did Joe Tims despise

the inefficiency of the apothecary whom it was *his* business to drive!

A terrible event was the cause of his separating from Influenza Peg. Obadiah Senna, after passing for thirty years as an apothecary of unblemished reputation, a punctual payer of parish rates, an indefatigable vestryman, and active private of the Bloomsbury Volunteers, came, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, to be brought up by Crowner's Quest law, on suspicion of woman-slaughter, — even that of Hester Senna, his wife!

Though sufficiently lucky to satisfy twelve competent jurymen that the late Mrs. Senna had been removed from this vale of tears by "ACCIDENTAL DEATH," most of them, particularly those who were married men, could not help manifesting an opinion, that the accident which had caused tincture of opium to change places on the shelf with the bottle of tincture of rhubarb, from which the old lady was in the habit of administering to herself a daily dose, was a *very* lucky *accident* for the survivor!

The old nurse, by whose enmity the

nature of Mrs. Senna's last illness had been brought to light, was not the only person who shook her head on the occasion. Evidence was brought before the jury that, in domestic life, Senna was far from being mild as emulsion ; and, though honourably acquitted of malice prepense in the act of delinquency, the feelings of the female portion of the population manifested themselves so vehemently at the interment of the victim, that the widower was recommended by the metropolitan police and other old women, to withdraw from the neighbourhood.

New Zealand, or some other colony as nearly approaching to penal as possible, was just then in vogue ; and poor Senna, with a cargo of agricultural and surgical implements, the Mechanic's Vade Mecum, and a London Pharmacopœia,—drugs from Apothecaries' Hall, and seeds from Minet's,—embarked as an emigrant for a *terra incognita*, where government promised a premium to all persons disposed to eat kangaroos, or be eaten by bush-rangers,—as the Act directs.

Right glad would he have been could he

have persuaded Joë Tims to accompany him, and drive his buffalo team, in a land where roads were not. But though Senna was forced to admit that "needs must when the devil drives," and to depart from a mother country so careful over its elderly ladies as not to admit of their being compelled to take the long nap by mistake of their husbands,—Joe saw no "needs must," because the apothecary wanted to drive.—He talked immensely about his native country, and preferred remaining in a land of XXX.

Again, therefore, was the poor whip precipitated from his driving-seat ; and very soon became convinced that a character to be asked for in New Zealand, was as good, or rather as bad, as no character at all. It was now his ambition to drive a pair. He had outlived his giggish propensities. The remembrance of his chilly nights at the sick man's door, was pain and Senna to him. But he was assured that "driving a gig and driving a chariot vos two ;" that in matters of coachmanship it is more than *le premier pas qui coûte* ; and that he wanted

length, breadth, and thickness, bulk and experience, for a coachman.

Joe Tims was almost in despair. One only resource presented itself; and against that, his spirit rebelled, *i. e.*—to become a Jarvey! *He*, poor, innocent young man, was unadvised that his coadjutor of the Woolsack had in *his* adversityhood officiated as reporter to a daily paper. And lo! his spirit waxed proud, and he would not hear of a hackney coach.

To be sure, old Peg was not Peacock; but she was an animal of some merit in her way; and the influenza gig a creditable vehicle, and the harness new and wholesome; and, after having presided in a creditable stable, to spend his life in tickling the lean ribs of two wretched brutes, as spare and miserable as himself, rained upon and snowed upon as if still an apothecary's drudge of all work, was a humiliation scarcely to be borne.

To this complexion, however, did he come at last. Joe Tims, proud as old Coutts of his rise in life, is far from unwilling (after a fourth tumbler of stiff punch) to

allude to the days when "he druv' number three hundred and forty-five, as neat a cutch as any on the stand."

His enemies have been heard to advert unhandsomely to the wisp of straw which was then all round his old oil-skin hat; and other items of hackney-coachmanly costume, far from mentionable, more especially to a man clothed at this present speaking in purple plush and fine linen. But this is invidious. The body-coachman has never been heard to deny having kept the stand; and it is, probably, to his experience in driving for several years a pair of quadrupeds, (to call them horses were too courtierly,) whereof one was a stumbler and the other a bolter, that he is indebted for his professional skill.

His fare was now harder than ever,—because dependent on his fares. The stand, too, was almost more than he could stand; and the perpetual badge of servitude to which he was condemned badgered him out of his life. More than once, in a fit of just indignation against Providence, he caused himself to be shaven and shorn, sand-

papery and scrubbed into presentability, and, having procured a proxy for the day, like some Parliamentary dandy bent upon making holiday at a ball, attempted to procure himself a more honourable post.

But no one would abide the sight of him ! —Meagre,—chap-fallen,—out of fashion,—out of favour,—the outline of a man,—the mere hint of a coachman,—with a waist like an opera-dancer's, and cheeks as lank as a black penitent's,—how could he presume to pretend to the honours of a decent coach-box !

He was told—as modern artists of their pictures, and fashionable novelists of their works—that he was much too slight. And lo ! in the bitterness of his soul he returned once more to find safety in numbers, and take his stand among his fellows ; much marvelling by what process of stuffing his doublet with straw, it might be possible for a poor Jarvey ever to become a man of substance !—

But promotion cometh neither from the east, nor yet from the west. The purple plush of Joe Tims came to him at last out

of number three hundred and forty-five ! It was his fortune, late one autumn evening, to translate, from a street-corner in the vicinity of Charing Cross, to one of the dingy lunatic-asylum-looking square brick mansions of Bloomsbury Square, a tall perpendicular female, almost as spare as himself, and, consequently, nowise interesting to his feelings beyond the eighteenpence accruing to him from her transit. In the eyes of Joe Tims she was only "fare-ly fair."

But lo ! on proceeding next morning to the brushing of the dusty cushions of his detested vehicle, he found, curiously inserted between them, a small parchment-covered pocket-book, mysterious-looking as that of William of Deloraine.

To whom could it belong ? Not to the flashy young gentleman he had conveyed from the cigar divan to his lodgings in Mary-le-bone ; for *such* people do not deal in parchment-covered pocket-books. Not to the decrepit man he had transported from the neighbourhood of the loan-office to his door at Brompton ; for *such* people

do not deal in parchment-covered pocket-books. Not to the marine-store-keeping family whom he had conveyed pleasuring at per hour to the Zoological Gardens ; even *such* people do not deal in parchment-covered pocket-books. No ! It was evidently the property of some person in particularly easy circumstances ; for it contained a register of sums weekly deposited in the savings' bank, without any per contra of sums withdrawn therefrom.

At length, the insertion of a proper name served as some index to the proprietor. "Mistress Ursula Primrose" was the happy proprietor of the pocket-book, and the vested securities of which it treated. Mrs. Ursula Primrose sounded wonderfully like the perpendicular lady of Bloomsbury Square. At all events, it could be no offence to flog the bolter and stumbler thitherwards, and take her legal opinion upon the subject.

Number three hundred and forty-five reached the door. Joe Tims rang at the bell ; and the fat footman who responded to the summons, (and whose glazy eyes flashed like a horn lantern when at first he

pretended to resent the intrusion of a hackney coachman coming to call, uncalled for, at a genteel residence,) was startled by the mere mention of the name of MRS. URSULA PRIMROSE into more than Chesterfieldian courtesy. He drew up—he tried to look sober—he almost bowed as he requested Joe to step in, without so much as a glance at his dirty boots, or a hint about the door-mat.

“He would let Mrs. Primrose know that a gentleman wished to speak with her.—What might be his business?”

“His business was with Mrs. Primrose.”

The body-footman saw that Jarvey was wide awake. He departed; and, after a pause, Mrs. Primrose made her stately *entrée* into the hall, just as Joe was beginning to feel that the smell of roast-beef in the house foretold a cruelly appetizing two o'clock dinner for the Lower House; and to wonder why the fat footman's eyes should look so hazy, while that succulent meal was still in prospect.

But she was no longer the lady of the flowered shawl, patent silk front, and green

ankle-boots of the preceding night. Mrs. Primrose was now as yellow as her name, —slatternly, cross, and unpropitious. A portentous frown contracted her brows as Joe first presented himself to her acquaintance. But the sudden change operated in her physiognomy by his production of the parchment-covered pocket-book, would in other centuries have passed for magic! Reversing the old order of things on this occasion, it was the Gorgon's Head itself that became converted into stone.

After a momentary pause, consequent upon this singular petrification, she invited Joe to step into the parlour, in a whisper of more than mellifluous sweetness.

“ *Did you say anything to John?* ”—was Mrs. Ursula's first mysterious inquiry, after closing the door.

Joe diplomatized. He could give no direct answer; for he knew not “John,” and could by no means surmise what it was in his power to have communicated to him. —He looked wise, therefore, and shook his head “dubersomely.”

Mrs. Ursula's hand was already in her

pocket. She had been on the point, like John Gilpin's wife, of "pulling out half-a-crown." But this ominous gesture of the hackney coachman's, like the touch of Midas, converted what she had in her hand into gold.—She pulled out a sovereign.

"*Am I safe?*" said she, in the same mysterious whisper, fixing a terrified and tempting glance upon Joe, as she inserted the coin into his horny palm,—"*I say, am I safe with you?*"—

"*Safe as the Bank!*" cried Joe, with a hackney-coachman-like wink; whereupon, Mrs. Primrose, seeing significance and menace in the familiarity, staggered to a chair.

"*What, then, are your demands?*" said she, in a faint voice. "*Will nothing tempt you?*"

Still blundering and wondering, Joe Tims observed that "he didn't vont no temptation, not he!"

"I know I am in your power!" faltered the agonised housekeeper. "It is the first time as ever I took a glass of anything stronger than spring-water; and I suppose

I shall repent it the longest day I have to live. However, I engage to make it worth your while to keep my counsel. —What do you say to a comfortable situation? —Thirty-five guineas a-year, —two liveries, —no night-work, — liberal housekeeping, —and a month's warning?"

"SAY?" —cried Joe Tims, almost as much startled by the offer as Mrs. Ursula Primrose had been by the sight of the parchment-covered pocket-book,—"vy, I should say the lady vos a reg'lar trump vot procured it for me."

A bargain was soon struck, —a blind bargain on the part of Joe; still unable to conjecture what might be the state-secret in his keeping, which had every appearance of being worth a Jew's eye. Nor was it till long after the wisp of straw all round his hat had been exchanged, like Mrs. Primrose's half-crown, for gold, —and his frieze wrap-rascal for a livery as resplendent as consorts with the lustre of the Bloomsbur्यान world of fashion, that he fully understood the dilemma of the maiden housekeeper of a prudish widow lady, relict of a K.C. —not

only convicted of having been taken up at the door of a gin-palace, but agonised by discovery of the loss of her savings'-bank register, conveying in black and white to the least acute observer, the exact amount of her weekly peculations !

She had fancied herself lost, as well as the pocket-book. She had felt convinced that the terrible record would fall into the hands of the police, and be brought back to her lady, whose address it bore. Visions of arraignment,—of restitution,—had rendered her pillow sleepless ! No wonder that she conceived the probity of the hackney-coachman to be beyond all praise, if not beyond all reward.

Joseph Tims—we no longer presume to abbreviate the coachman—had now abandoned number three hundred and forty-five, to think for the future only of number one.

Regarding him as master of her fatal secret, Mrs. Primrose had not only procured him the place of her lady, Mrs. Creepmouse, but took care to render it a place of pleasantness and peace. Her control over the

household was absolute as the sceptre of the Medes and Persians ; and not a slave therein had a right to look the new coachman in the face.

The housekeeper doubled the quality of the ale,

And lo ! two puddings smoked upon the board !

Had she been feeding up Joseph for a Smithfield prize, she could not have had tenderer care of his diet.

Now Joseph, like the psalmist, was profane enough to find a divinity in his digestive organs ; and it was only natural that she who tended so pamperingly what was his god, should become his goddess. In the strength of the XXXX perhaps consisted his weakness. But by dint of seeing double, he Jehu-diciously ceased to regard Mrs. Ursula as a single woman too spare to become the rib of a thriving coachman. Whether the parchment-covered pocket-book were the Ovid in which he conned his art of love, or whether in the dulness of that dullest of dull households—the Lethe's wharf wherein his weediness lay rotting—

he fancied his former fare into a fair,—certain it is that, two years after assuming Mrs. Creepmouse's livery, a clandestine marriage converted Ursula Primrose into Ursula Tims, and the parchment-covered pocket-book into a partnership account.

Such was the origin of the comeliness which was the origin of Joseph's progress into Body-Coachmanship.

A long series of hard feeding and soft sleeping produced such an expansion of the outward man of Joseph Tims, that on the decease of the Bloomsbury widow, bequeathing a fat legacy to Mr. and Mrs. Tims, (whose merits and fidelity were set forth in five-and-twenty shillings' worth of legal parchment and engrossing,) the legatee was nearly as fat as his legacy.

From that period, he adhered to his box as a mere matter of pride. He did not choose, not he, though independent, to fling down the reins, and retire into the humdrum obscurity of private life. He could not abide the idea of levees and drawing-rooms, at which his ponderous person added no weight to the dignities of the court. He

accepted office accordingly in Grosvenor Square; having a second coachman and two scrubs under him, to endure the odium of the screwishness of his government contracts, and grease the wheels of his Jehudicial vocation.

Such is the well-wigged man in authority, to whom, amid the smash of panels, his brother whips of May Fair refer for arbitration. Mr. Tims is a great man,—a householder,—a sound Tory in all but the Corn question. It has been maliciously asserted that, like Lablache when giving tongue in the Puritani, he has an eye to the Royal Box. But we have his own authority to state, that so long as the lovely proprietress of the best-turned-out equipage in town remains contented, her ladyship may reckon upon his faithful service as her BODY-COACHMAN.

THE BANKER.

THERE are two leading classes of London Bankers—the square-toed and the pointed. Of the multifarious qualifications of these human appendages to the moneyed and unmoneyed world, the adnoun most advantageously applicable is the same as to a lady's horse. To be a “safe” man is to be a good banker.

As regards this important distinction, however, neither square-toedness nor pointed-toedness is to be relied on. Of the many unstable firms, which, by anomaly of speech, have figured in the course of the last ten years, in the Gazette, some have been as remarkable for the quizzical and old-fashioned sobriety of the heads of the house, as others for their flashy elegance; the steadiness of the former, and volatility of the latter, being equally

a matter of assumption, with a view to increase the cliency of the establishment.

Your sober city-banker is a man who affects, in his shop and his exterior, to possess that within which passeth show. His clothes and manners are homely, his equipage plain, his town and country-houses "neat, not gaudy;" abounding in solid comfort, but eschewing all pretence to luxurious prodigality.

Josiah Grubbinson chooses it to be perceived by the care he takes of his own money, what care he is capable of taking of the moneys of other people. Sparing and thought-worn, there is nothing in his gravity of brow to encourage indiscreet encroachment on the part of his constituents. The defaulter who knows the *debit* side of his account to be in excess, dare not encounter the repellent aspect of a man who attends divine service thrice on every Sabbath, and has his name inscribed, perforce of ample benefactions, in the hearts of the church-wardens of his parish and the subscription books of all the religious and charitable institutions of the vast metropolis.

So conscientious an individual is not a man to be lightly molested with avowals of need, or the indiscretion that engenders need. He is fenced round by the quickset hedge of his own virtues ; intangible as the wooden effigy of a saint in its crystal shrine. Grave, earnest, undemonstrative, it appears almost a crime to hazard the ruffling of so serene a nature. The attempt were as wanton as when perverse children fling stones into a glassy pool, to mar with convolving circles its sacred evenness of surface.

So long as the reserved banker appears quiet

as a nun,
Breathless with adoration,

we almost forget that his adoration is simply that of the molten calf,—the most mundane of all idolatries.

The serenity of the banking Tartuffe, meanwhile, is a gift worth twenty per cent. to the firm. “ Like loves like ! ” quoth the vulgate of “ *qui se ressemble s’assemble ;* ” and to the compter of the sober banker,

comes the sober citizen; the moderate man, whose moderate gains are sure, and who looks out for a sure banker in whose till to deposit them. Thither rolls the dark and unemblazoned chariot, rumbling from Edmonton after its pair of fat and bean-fed horses, to cash its weekly cheque for its weekly house-accounts. Thither comes the snobby gig, conveying red-faced individuals, whose upper man is thatched with straw, and whose nether man is subjected to the stripes of corduroys. Nay, thither, on Saturdays at even, rattle the market-carts which lack courage to return to Ealing or Battersea Rise with a charge of gold in their weazel skin-purses. The tapsters, who delight in the sobriety of all human beings but their customers, swear that he is the man for their money.

And so he is, by virtually making it his own! So painstaking is the air of the decorous banker, that these happy dupes entertain a vague conviction that he carries about with him in his pockets the exact amount of their balance, not caring to entrust it even to his iron safe!

Nor *does* he. He knows better. The square-toed banker shows how fully he appreciates the value of a deposit by instantly endeavouring to double the amount. Where the stock is so good, it ought to be blessed with increase; procreation of gold being the end and aim of bankermoney. The net produce deposited with him by the corduroys and market-carts, accordingly returns unsuspected to their neighbourhood in the suburbs; enkindling the kilns of brick-fields, the furnaces of gas-works; fermenting the vats of breweries, and the stills of distillers. It gallops in mail-coaches; it whirrs along the rail; it crosses the Isthmus of Suez; and disturbs with the paddles of steamboats the tranquil waters of the Niger or Nile, and foetid canals of China and Batavia.

While the greasy buttermilk man enjoys his quiet afternoon's nap in his parlour at Kennington, or his pew in Ebenezer Chapel, satisfied that his unctuous bank-notes are rotting themselves at ease in a safe in Lombard Street, little does he opine, good easy man! that they are evaporating *in fumo*

from forth the tall chimneys of twenty horse-power engines, sinking shafts into the bowels of the earth, or encumbering the surface thereof with the squares and crescents of some new-born watering-place, rising, like Venus of old, from the froth of the sea !

What matters?—His ignorance is bliss. —His money, that is, the money of some newer dupe, is forthcoming at his demand ! When he saith, “the funds are low, buy stock,” stock is bought, as the stock-broker’s receipt avouches ; and he lives and dies the happier for having his imprisoned soul taken and lapt in Elysium by his solemn banker ; unless, indeed, the gas-works should explode, or the bricks fall—*like* bricks,—carrying with them the unstable firm and its square-toed commander-in-chief.

Even then, he scarcely finds it in his conscience to complain. He is reminded by a circular, as plausible as the face of his grave deceiver, “how strenuously Mr. Josiah Grubbinson laboured against the adverse nature of the times, devoting himself

with all his soul, and with all his strength, to business, for the sole profit and advantage of his constituents ; how his head grew white, and his cheeks wrinkled, for very zeal in their behalf : and how, when he found that the pressure of the crisis rendered it impossible for the house to go on, he instantly closed it."

Such is the usual drift of similar addresses. If he inquire, on the other hand, with insolent pertinacity, for the title-deeds of the family estate in Kent, he will be referred to the marriage-settlement of Mrs. Josiah Grubbinson. The house in Bedford Square is the property of the eldest son ; the villa at Wandsworth was bequeathed by an aunt to the younger children. Mr. Josiah Grubbinson's "robe, and his integrity to Heaven" are all he has to surrender in Basinghall Street !

Nevertheless, the fellow in corduroys is required to compassionate the wealthy banker, who, "after going through life so respectably," is reduced to ruin ! He is told he must be a brute not to feel for the mortification of one whose honest name is

hoisted into the Gazette, after having figured in deputations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in finance-committees, in royal and imperial loans, and, above all, in lists of subscriptions to county hospitals, lunatic asylums, and refuges for the destitute.

How can he refuse, under such circumstances, to sign the certificate of a worthy individual, so oppressed by the evil juncture of the times, ruined by the war in Affghanistan, and overturned by an Oregon panic? Besides, Mr. Josiah Grubbinson has no idea of resuming business as a banker. It is his intention to retire into private life, in his wife's country-seat in Kent, his son's mansion in Bedford Square, and his daughter's villa at East Wandsworth. The fatigues of the speculations undertaken for the benefit of his cliency, have impaired his constitution, and made him old before his time. His day for work is over. All he asks is to live. *Otium*—*otium* without *dignitate*, is the utmost to which he aspires. Those who wish to speculate in gas-works and brickfields, may go and speculate for themselves.

Reverse of wrong is not always right, nor reverse of right always wrong. But the very reverse of the solemn or square-toed banker is he of the West End, Sir Eustatius Consols, who spins his cobwebs of golden wire in the sunshine of life, instead of the shade; and who, instead of delivering his guineas in a copper-shovel to his customer, serves out his half-pence in one of precious metal. This Chesterfield of money-dealers belongs to the vast family of the Surfaces. Everything about himself, or his establishment, is varnished and burnished.

Dress, equipage, house, furniture, fruit, flowers, society,—everything is *optissime*, everything forced. Having begun life with an aristocratic alliance, by marrying the fiftieth cousin of a needy Scotch or Irish Lord, he pursues his system by sending his sons to Eton, and his daughters to Madame Michau's, all for the good of the firm. For the good of the firm, he grows prize peaches, and feeds prize merinos, duly advertised by the Morning Post. For the good of the firm, he gives weekly dinner-

parties, and monthly balls or concerts throughout the season. For the good of the firm, his wife's diamonds are reset at Mortimer and Hunt's, to glitter at the drawing-room. For the good of the firm, his new carriage is seen, brilliant but substantial, in front of Houlditch's shop.

Quick-sighted, and far-sighted, he has as ready an eye to the shop as John Gilpin of old. At some public *fête*, he picks up the fan of a duchess; and, instead of instantly returning it, like a simply civil man, carries it off in his pocket, to send it back the following morning with a flumming note, calculated to impress indelibly upon the mind of her Grace the name of the Sir Eustatius Consols who presents compliments in so smart a running hand.

You see him shaking hands with some flashy but penniless younger brother, or fetching a chair for some girl of moderate fortune, and wonder why. *Why*, indeed! but that because from his box at the opera the canny banker has watched a showy Honourable close at the ear of Eve; calling blushes to the cheeks of the fair widow of

one of the unfairest—*Anglicè*, richest—of nabobs ; and has been the first to discover that the pretty girl has bagged the heir-apparent of the wealthiest dukedom in the three kingdoms.

Certain fools have been obtuse enough to cavil at Lady Consol's box at the Opera as un-bankerish and prodigal. Bless their five wits ! It plays its part to admiration, for the good of the firm.

Examine her ladyship's visiting-list, or rather, the lists of invitations to her entertainments (for she is a great deal too far north to invite her poor relations of twenty descents, to her house,) and you will find that all is according to Cocker. Not a name but might stand for a cipher. Not an individual but is translateable into realty or personalty. " Sir Hogmore and Lady Pigwigin, ten thousand a year in the Fens." " Mr. and Mrs. Groylyn Rugmouth, mines to the tune of hundreds of thousands." " Lord and Lady Frowsyfusty, worth their weight (and what a weight !) in gold !"

Examine the light of their respective countenances, Sir Eustatius at the door of

the supper-room,—Lady Consols, of the ball-room,—pressing their civilities on their customers, past, present, or to come. What urbanity, what courtliness, what flexibility of vertebræ and knees. The courtesy of Lady Consols to a dowager duchess with a sufficient jointure, is a thing of caoutchouc ; and when she shines forth upon some heiress who has bought her way out of Aldermanbury into the baronetage, it is like the expansion of a July sun at noonday !

People love to be toadied. The rich crowd to the well-lighted, well-refreshed *fêtes* of Sir Eustatius Consols, season after season, year after year, till, insensibly, intimacy is begotten. On the failure or retirement of their banker, they recal to mind the persevering civilities of these hospitable hosts.

“ After all, they cannot choose a safer man than Sir Eustatius !—Sir Eustatius is one so completely above the world.—So much evidence of comfort and abundance in his establishment !—Nothing wanting !—Old wines, young horses, new pictures, old masters, new carriages, old servants.

It has become almost a bounden duty with them to bank with Sir Eustatius !”

Sir Eustatius and Lady Consols are, in fact, a sort of Monsieur and Madame Non-tongpaw of fashionable life. You ask in the park, “ To whom belongs that fine pair of bays ?”—“ To Lady Consols.” You inquire at Madame Devy’s for whom they are making that magnificent court-dress, trimmed with point ?—“ For Lady Consols.” You admire at Kitching’s a set of emeralds.—“ They are for Lady Consols.” You wish to secure Jullien’s band for your ball.—“ He is engaged to Lady Consols.” You think of giving a concert. Not one of the Italian singers but has taken earnest from Lady Consols !—But neither the bays, the point, the emeralds, the French orchestra, nor Italian chorus, are appreciated by her ladyship for their sake, or her own. It is simply essential to her to make her house and person agreeable to those she is desirous to conciliate, as hosts or guests, in order that Sir Eustatius may conciliate them as customers. Her cast of the net is a bold one ; her angling is angling with a golden hook ; and unless the draught, or take, of fishes,

be little short of miraculous, the game can scarcely pay. To deal with the great world, it is essential that out of every three persons, two should be able to defray the cost of the third ; and, for every Duke with a splendid rent-roll, there are poor relations, spunging friends, and swindling dependants to be compromised withal, who not unfrequently render them a profitless bargain.

A house of business of this description necessarily comprehends a baronet, and a member of parliament. The " Bart." looks well in the printed cheques ; while the senatorial dignity extends the connexion of the house, and brings it into hook and crook with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In former days, franking went for something, by saving a couple of hundreds per annum to the firm. But, even under the domination of penny postage, election expenses repay themselves by the divinity that doth hedge an M.P. in the eyes of smaller constituents ; and the consequence of a vote to be conciliated, in those of the greater. A seat in parliament is, consequently, a species of underwriting to a banker.

If one wished to adduce a modern example of the Dives in purple and fine linen of modern times, it should be in the form of a thriving London banker. Their lives exhibit the comfortable in quintessential comfort. A Duke, with a rent-roll of one hundred thousand pounds per annum, is often at a loss for a fifty-pound note—nay, for less. A Duke is preyed upon by auditors, agents, stewards, bailiffs, attorneys, bankers. But the banker is king over his own till. Money is power; and over money, *his* power is great. His foot is upon the necks of the proud, and over the fiercest of the aristocracy doth he cast his shoe. But the shoe thus cast must be of such costly materials, that it is more than problematical whether a Cræsus of the counter, of this description, is to be considered a safe man!

It is amusing to observe what strange specifications enhance the prosperity of certain bankers. By force of affinity, one man succeeds with the Dissenters, another with the Quakers, a third with the Evangelical, a fourth with the theatrical world—

(and a hit or miss order of success it is !)—
The connection of one firm lies with the agricultural interest, of another with America, of a third with Cochinchina. The jargon and legerdemain of the whole tribe is, however, much the same.

Welcome ever smiles,
And Farewell goes out sighing ;

a low bow for a large deposit,—a blank stare at a large demand.

In these days of literary destitution, a private secretaryship to a London banker might not be so bad a place to apply for ; the reader to a theatre or a publisher not having half so great a call upon his discretion or powers of language, as such a functionary.

Every moneyed man, or rather every man having the reputation of a capitalist, and the misfortune of having banked with an insecure firm, must have had occasion to admire, on the failure of his banker, the number and eloquence of the missives addressed to him in solicitation of his custom. He finds himself suddenly hoisted

upon a pedestal, with a dozen servile money-spinners crawling in the dust at his feet. But after having made his election, he is not a little diverted to perceive the change of tone in the very first letter addressed to him by the new chancellor of his empty exchequer. The superlatives have already subsided into comparatives. Mr. Grubbinson, who was his most obedient humble servant in 1841, becomes his obedient humble servant in 1842, and his obedient servant in 1843. On the first overdrawing of his account, he is addressed by Grubbinson as Grubbinson and Co. ; and, in case of a lagging remittance or dishonoured bill, is informed by him, "for partners and self," that it has been "the uniform practice of the house," or "the immemorial custom of their management of business," &c. &c. &c. After having dragged you by the ears into their books, they use just as little ceremony in kicking you out of them.

But to manage the intermedial negotiations, the coaxing in and bowing out of Grubbinson's shop, perforce of cor-

respondence, requires no trifling exercise of secretarial prudence. When personally effected, the tact of Grubbinson by himself Grubbinson, alone suffices. The man hardens or softens towards the fluctuating constituent, like a bar of iron in a forge. There is as wide a difference between the countenance that says "Good day!" to the man of thousands and that which, the following minute, says, "Get along about your business!" to one in arrear of hundreds,—as between the winter and summer solstice!

Safer than either the rigidly severe or irregularly obliging banker, is the one between Squaretoes and Pointed, who neither solicits business nor rejects it; satisfied with the cliency bequeathed to him by his predecessor, and sure to surrender it undiminished by ungraciousness, as unendangered by irregular concessions, to those who shall succeed him; pursuing the even tenour of his social way, without regard to the conciliation of business; and creating no intertangement between his counter and his dining-table.

The business of private banking is supposed to have been greatly diminished of late years by the increase of commercial or joint-stock banks. We doubt whether the preference thus accorded be half so much, conceded to prejudice or faith in the greater security in these public concerns, as to the absence of offence in the person of the banker.

The manager or superintendent of these concerns is a species of irresponsible and disinterested intermediary, who has no object in picking your pocket, or throwing dust, even if gold dust, into your eyes. You run no risk of being affronted through his means by an invitation to tea, when you feel that your account intitles you to be asked to dinner. He is an influence rather than an individual. You would as soon think of feeling piqued at his deportment as by some dispensation of Providence. It matters not to you whether he drive a barouche or gig, or even adventure the infamy of a hack-cab. He has his stipend, as nominated in the bond, nor more nor less ; and to play at ducks and drakes

with your money, in the rashness of speculation, would not advance him a doit. He advertises not his dinners in the Morning Post, nor does his wife give balls or concerts ;—the better chance that his name will never figure in an uttermost corner of some Wednesday's or Monday's morning paper, in a citation from that exterminating document, the London Gazette !—

Be it noticed, among the notabilia of the moneyed world, that there are in London one or more banking houses, whose books of business extend back from the reign of Victoria to that of Elizabeth, where, under the name of goldsmiths, curious items of credit appear therein, such as goblets, tankards, and apostle spoons. These books constitute invaluable historical archives, besides conveying a patent of commercial nobility ; when, as in certain instances we could point out, the banker of to-day descends in direct line, and inherits the identical patronymic of the goldsmith his ancestor,—even as

An Amurath an Amurath succeed,
And Harry, Harry.

This is the very legitimacy and conservatism of the kingdom of Mammon. This is an indisputable attestation of hereditary prudence and probity. Such a standing in commercial life becomes a sort of second conscience. Three centuries of trustworthiness!—twelve reigns of financial discretion! It amounts, in business-life, to a barony connected with Magna Charta in the aristocratic!

Most of the prominent financial demigods, however, are men of yesterday,—individuals whom Fortune has rolled to the top of her wheel by a single turn, perhaps to be rolled back again with similar precipitation. The greatest Jewish names in the moneyed world are names unknown to the eighteenth century, and which the nineteenth may be reserving to

Point a moral and adorn a tale.

Even Rothschild commenced his prosperity at Frankfort at the coronation of the late Emperor of Austria, by selling copper medals commemorative of the event, (in

company with his sister,) at a beer house of the city.

The life, influence, and connections of Coutts will one day become historical, conveying a great moral lesson as regards the frailties and follies at which the worshippers of Mammon, even of the highest grade and repute, will connive, in pursuance of their vile idolatry;—how they will swallow the camels forced upon them by a rich banker, and strain at the gnats buzzing round the head of uninfluential penury:

The thriving London banker of the Coutts order is, in fact, a Sir Oracle. Your Privy Councillor sings small to him;—your learned magistrate defers to his decree;—the thews and sinews of the war of life lie at his disposal. At his nod, the sluice-gates close or open which control the fate of a country, and the destinies of thousands. The Sultan is not more absolute. When he concedes, the world applauds his liberality,—where he withholds, his prudence. His penuriousness is foresight,—his weakness magnanimity. Whether close-

fisted or open, a great banker can do no wrong—*i. e.* till his docket is struck.

More would we say; but be a simple anecdote the apology for our discretion. Some one was complaining to a popular lawyer of the inconvenience he had sustained from the failure of his banker. "You should do as I do," replied the cautious friend. "*I* am never inconvenienced. I have *two* bankers;—and overdraw both."

On this hint, having become the banker of our own banker, the less we say the better in elucidation of the mysteries of the calling. Nay, truth to tell, howbeit we have no house of business in Lombard Street, we entertain a wondrous degree of fellow-feeling towards—the London Banker.

THE HOTEL KEEPER.

“ MINE Host,” whether of the Garter or Star, was formerly a mighty pleasant fellow—who drank and jested with his customers, making them pay for his jokes and potations. In the present day, when the diffusion of classes render their fusion more difficult, (so that human beings are stuck up in rows in the world, like plants in the horticultural gardens, classed and labelled, stiff as the sticks that intercept them,) you pay for the wine and pastime of your host, but without participating in the entertainment.

Mine host of the Hotel, is a well-bred gentleman, whom its inmates never behold from the day when he inaugurates them in their apartments, with as many bows as would place an unpopular candidate at the head of the poll, to that on which, with similar ceremonial, he presents them their

bill ;—as though a highwayman were to make three glissades and a coupé, preparatory to his “ Your money or your life ! ”

The Hotel-keeper is usually some nobleman’s maître d’hôtel, or groom of the chambers, made an honest man of in holy matrimony by her ladyship’s confidential maid or consequential housekeeper ; who invests their united earnings, perquisites, pickings, (and no matter for the *last* word of the indictment,) in furnishing and bur-nishing some roomy mansion of the West-end, too much out of repair to serve as a private residence, for “ noblemen and gentlemen,” by dint of showy calico, stained mahogany, and half the brass of a whole Birmingham foundry ; thereby intitling themselves to demand, as the rent of every separate suite of apartments, as much as the whole house would have cost, if hired for the season.

Prodigious four-post beds, groaning with draperies and fringes, destined to accumulate dust, soot, and their living concomitants, for ten years to come, are erected in the sleeping rooms, with as much labour and ingenuity as are employed to run up

a three-storied house in the suburbs ;— with rickety wardrobes and washing-stands, picked up at sales, or purchased at cheap and nasty furniture-brokers in the Blackfriars Road,—whereof it is hazardous to open a drawer, not only on account of the effluvium of the boots or shoes of antecedent occupants, but from the certainty that three-quarters of an hour must be wasted in shoving, sidling, and swerving the said ill-fitting drawer back into its original position.

For the same reason, the prudent frequenter of a London hotel is careful not to draw down a blind,—premonished of the impossibility of ever getting it up again ;— or to *undraw* a curtain, from the clouds of dust instantly circulating through the apartment. The blind so displaced, or the drawer thus incautiously drawn forth, is moreover sure to be recalled to his memory by a charge in the bill for repairing the same ; such as

	s.	d.
To man one day repairing Blind . .	17	6
Cords, &c., for do. . .	6	10
Easing Drawer, strained . .	10	6
&c. &c. &c.		

To touch the handle of a China or marble vase, is equally rash. Pooloo's cement will not last for ever; and when you find the vase standing handle-less before you, like a door from which some slang-loving roué has wrenched off the knocker, but with evident symptoms of the glue of preceding fractures and mending, be assured that you will have to book up the full original cost of the "handsome vase of Nan-kin dragon China, finely enamelled," which was purchased damaged at a sale ten years before, and has been successively paid for by twenty victims, inhabitants of the same unlucky suite.

The first object of the hotel-keeper, after fitting up his rooms with gaudy papers, showy carpets, and trophies and cornices of gilt brass, is to purchase vast services of iron-stone China, and plated dishes and covers, which, on an emergency, when the families under his roof are sufficiently frantic or unfortunate to dine at home, he fills with parsley beds; in the centre of which, by dint of much examination and a powerful glass, are discoverable a thin slice of cod or

salmon, or a couple of fried whittings—a few chips of cutlets—a starveling cat roasted rabbitwise, or a brace of sparrows deluged in parsley and butter, designated in the bill of fare as pigeons or chickens.

The second course will probably be a bread pudding, formed of the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table ; or a tart, apparently composed of buff leather and mouldy fruit, having been allowed to mellow for a week in the larder, in company with the Stilton cheese. But then, it is served on a lordly dish, and covered with an embossed cover.

Such is the moderate *mem.* of an hotel dinner. Its gaudy days are still harder of digestion ; the worst viands, charged at the highest rate ; meagre poultry—stale vegetables—doubtful fish. It is not the host who has to eat them ; and the fashion of the olden time, of allotting him his share of the repast, was surely so far advantageous, that it operated like the functions of the carver and taster at a royal banquet, as a security against being poisoned in cold blood.

On the same grounds, in choosing an

hotel, it is always desirable to select one to which, like the Clarendon, a coffee-room is attached. Those which are not furnished with such a gastronomic safety-valve, are compelled (though not by Act of Parliament) to consume their own scraps; devouring in patties or a currie on Monday, the lobster they pronounced impossible on the Saturday preceding; and swallowing in the shape of oyster sauce, the repellent reptiles abhorrently left on their plates at supper overnight.

It is horrific to think of the number of times the same articles of food are made to figure at the table,

Wearing strange shapes, and bearing many names.

In certain cases, where the Hotel-keeper has risen to his dignity as a householder from the post of head-waiter at a coffee-house, the evil is increased by his bringing in the first dish, and doing the honours of his soup,—a square of portable, dissolved in tepid water, and tasting sorely of the copper of a plated soup-tureen, the metallic poison being counteracted by a handful of coarse spices, and sufficient pepper to devil

a whole poultry-yard. But the gentleman-host is so well got up, and his specious laudation of the excellence of his cook is so pompously delivered, that you prefer choaking in silence to disputing the point. By *his* account (both verbally and clerkly delivered), you have turtle and venison before you, if you had only sense or appetite to find it out ; and in spite of the evidence that it is mere roast and boiled, (the roast being a chip of the old block, and the water which the lamb or chicken was seethed in having been already brought you to wash your hands), you wisely prefer acquiescence, in order to dismiss to his evening paper and sloe-juice negus, the individual who stands wheezing over you, with an eye to his bill, and an ear to what gossip he can pick up from your table-talk.

On the Continent, hotel-keepers are uniformly in the pay of the police. In London, they exercise an inquisition of their own, of which their waiters are the familiars. Not a note or letter passing through the hands of these worthies but assumes a rotundiform shape, from the bulging to

which it has been subjected ;—and every night, when the head-waiter carries in his daily evidence to the book-keeper of the wine, soda-water, and other extras consumed by the inmates, he accompanies his account with particulars of visits and visitors, letters, and duns, which, by dint of prying into drawers and loitering on stair-cases, he has been able to amass, mismatch, and weave into a tissue of scandal.

He “ has his suspicions that the gentleman in black whom Sir Thomas calls his solicitor, and to whom he is never to be denied, is no better than a money-lender ; and as to the handsome Colonel, who calls every day at five, being a cousin of the gay widow on the second floor—he knows better !”

An important branch of consumption in hotels consists in the potables. During his aristocratic service, the hotel-keeper, when waiting at table as *maître d’hôtel*, being accustomed to hear frequent remarks that nothing was more injurious to wine than the rumbling of carts and carriages over the cellars, he provides against such an injury by laying in no stock to be rumbled over ;

but contents himself with having in his fresh-brewed port or sherry from an advertising shop in the Strand,—per cart, weekly,—or per barrow, daily. It is only his soda-water, which, being uninjurable by street rumbling, he keeps by him from year to year. To ask for French wines in the common run of London hotels, is an act of intrepidity only excusable in such as are scientifically curious in chemical compounds.

It is scarcely possible for the least inquisitorial frequenter of an hotel to remain unconscious or insensible to his fellow lodgers. Thanks to the thinness of partitions and a common staircase, he becomes painfully and reluctantly participant in their family secrets. A sympathy is inevitably begotten. He not only dines upon their fillet of veal, minced, or sends his fillet to them minced in his turn,—he not only resigns himself to their potatoes mashed, or inflicts upon them his drumsticks of a chicken in a fricassée,—but is unpleasantly apprised by oral evidence when the ears of her ladyship's daughters have been boxed,

or when her ladyship's self has been subjected to conjugal objurgation for the price of her box at the Opera.

He is kept awake till daybreak, morning after morning, by two charming sisters prattling their mutual confidences in an adjoining room, while curling their hair after their balls, or by the sobbings of the lady's-maid after a universal blowing-up. By the scent of the towels placed on his stand, screwed into a dry linen press, instead of being subjected to the washing-tub between service and service, he is able to ascertain whether his fair neighbours prefer eau-de-cologne to lavender-water, or indulge in Barèges baths ; and without exercising the baleful scrutiny of the head-waiter, is compelled to know *when* they are waiting for the milliner, or when they are "at home only to the Captain."

The Hotel-keeper, meanwhile snugly ensconced in his private room, like the spider which, retired into a corner of its web, watches the simple flies gradually entangling themselves in its meshes, takes care only that the brills which figure on the

table shall figure in the ledger as turbots with lobster-sauce, and that the heads of the woodcocks and pheasants shall be kept sacred as that of the Baptist, in order to consecrate dishes of hashed mutton, to appear hereafter as *salmis de bécasse* or *de faisan*;—writing down teas for tea,—coffees for coffee; and every Sunday afternoon, converting in the standing accounts the every 5s. 0d. into 5s. 6d., and every 2s. 0d. into 2s. 9d., by the addition of a curly tail above or below zero.

Another important branch of his business is to take care that the dinners be not *too* appetizing; that the bread be stale enough,—the Stilton new enough,—the lamb old,—the mutton young,—the beef coarse as if from the bulls of Basan;—the coffee weak,—the viands strong!

Aware that a family having taken root in his house, and, by sending forth their visiting cards, declared it their domicile for the season, is not likely to be at the trouble of striking its tents and removing elsewhere, his zeal abates from week to week of their sojourn. The only individual to

whom he is at the trouble of making his house agreeable is some wealthy minor, who pays interest per annum for a bill, to be discharged when he attains his majority ; or foreigners of distinction, by whose courier he is kept in awe, because at some future season the gentleman in gold lace and jack-boots may have the bear-leading of other princes from Krim Tartary, or dukes from the Two Sicilies.

With all their penalties on purse and comfort, however, the London Hotels afford a satisfactory relief from the cares of temporary housekeeping. Deaths, marriages, or baptisms, in country families, involving brief and sudden visits to the metropolis, would otherwise be scarcely carried on with decency. The happy wretch relieved from an East India voyage,—the *unhappy* one subpœnaed for a Chancery suit,—sees in the gas-lamps blazing over the door of a fashionable hotel, a beacon of hope. The courteous welcome of the cringing host and bowing waiters, appears auspicious. Everything comes with a call. In one's own domicile, a ring of the bell is an injury in-

flicted on one or more members of the establishment, who have nothing to gain by answering the summons. But in an hotel, every ring secures expenditure, varying from twelve-pence to a guinea. Coals, a sandwich, nay, even a candle to seal a letter, becomes an item to swell the amount of the narrow folios arrayed against the peace and purse of the lodger. Satisfy your conscience, therefore, oh ye who sojourn in hotels, that, give as much trouble as ye may, none but yourselves are the worse for it. A hotel-keeper knows how to value a perpetual ringer of bells!

Among the memorabilia of hotels is the ubiquity and insomnolency of head-waiters. At all hours of the day and night, these wretched creatures are primed for service. The family which returns at four from a ball, or the family which rises at five to start on a journey, finds them equally alert; after having waited at all the tables, and slaved after all the rings of all the bells the preceding day. It may be doubted, indeed, whether they behold their beds throughout the season,—a slight ablution or change of wig,

being their utmost refreshment. Hence the curious weazened old-boyish air of this peculiar and much enduring race of men; compelled to bow submission to as many masters as the toad lying under the harrow, when "Ilka tooth gives her a tug!"

Let nothing aforesaid be supposed to impugn the venerable dignity of the Clarendon, or the comfort and refinement of Mivart's *appartement des Princes*. These, and many others, are as excellent as their high reputation. Moreover, if people choose to be victimized by less conscientious hotel-keepers, the act is their own. When an Irish peer adduced to an hotel-keeper a charge of three-and-sixpence a-bottle for soda-water in a former bill, as a reason for having betaken himself elsewhere, mine host urbanely replied, "Your lordship ought to have told me what you intended to give. When properly arranged with, I charge as reasonably as anybody."—What can an hotel-keeper say more?

But for this highway and byway robbery during the harvest of the season, how, in fact, could the hotel-keeper enable himself to get through the autumn, when his house

might just as well be closed as Her Majesty's theatre, for any moneys taken at the doors.

Saving painters and whitewashers, not a soul crosses his threshold, unless now and then some skinflint of a dowager on her way through London from Broadstairs, to her dower-house in some midland county ; who, saving for the sops of her parrot and board of her maid, expends not a sixpence in the hotel ;—or a brace of tender parents conveying some young hopeful to Eton, and spending four-and-twenty reluctant hours in London, for a preparatory visit to the dentist.

For six or eight months, in short, every caravanserai stands empty as the heads of the honourables and lordlings who frequent it in May and July ; its kitchen-range rusting ; its curtains and hangings being required to “ down with their dust,” instead of its customers. Nevertheless, rent, taxes, and waiters, must be paid as regularly as if the hotel-keeper were not taking his pleasure at Ramsgate, and his customers at three hundred miles distance. And how is this to be effected, we should like to know,

unless by charging three-and-sixpence a bottle for soda water, while the sun shines, and the town is crowded ?

But if there be something unspeakably dolorous and funereal in the autumnal aspect of a fashionable hotel, there are few things pleasanter than its countenance in June. When the summer days are at their longest, the hall is thronged with liveries of every dye ; and a perpetual discharge of milliners' baskets and jewellers' cases encumbers the lobby.

The landed gentry who arrive in town from their country seats, come for the express purpose of spending and enjoying. The business of their visit to the metropolis, is pleasure. They come to present their daughters, attend levees and drawing-rooms, get invited to the Court balls, if they can ; and if not, content themselves with Almack's and the Caledonian.

Such people take wondrous delight in a new bonnet, are much addicted to fine feathers and French ribbons ; frequenting the Zoological Gardens on Sundays, and the Horticultural for every fête. Not over-choice in their diversions, they amuse

themselves without intermission. Operas, plays, balls, parties, dinners, déjeûners, exhibitions, fill up the round of every merry, busy, bustling day. Carriages stand at the doors of the hotels, at an hour when the doorways of private mansions are fast asleep. There are pretty sure to be children in the house, to insure Punch or the Fantoccini stopping before it; and not an itinerant band but strikes up its Strauss and Labitsky under the windows of the London Hotel. There, caper the dancing dogs—there, stalk the conjurors on stilts—there, tumble the tumblers! Small change is never wanting at the receipt of custom; and of these itinerant showmen, some secure retaining-fees from the nursery, others gratuity of dismissal from the drawing-room.

Throughout the morning, one mountebank succeeds to another; and the moment the lamps are lighted for dinner, the *cornet-à-piston* and his fellow conspirators against public comfort, commence their clang; while, clustered before the door, stand family-coaches, chariots, and well-appointed cabs, waiting to convey the

country-cousin, to the Opera, or French play. Oh ! joyous merry-go-round life of pleasure !—Oh ! laborious toil and labour of the do-nothings !—where are you more actively, or more brilliantly carried on, than in the neighbourhood of the fashionable hotels !

Next in importance to the London Hotel, are those of the watering places. Brighton and Cheltenham, Harrogate and Tunbridge-Wells, vie, indeed, with the hostelries of the metropolis, or perhaps excel them, their season being more definite and incisive. As regards pantry and buttery hatch, they are better provided ; and for the reason which enhances the merits of the Clarendon—the appendix of a coffee-room or ordinary. At the minor bathing places the case is different ; the apartments being more finely and flimsily furnished than those of London, the table more villanously provided.

The nearest approach, by the way, to the ancient hostel and host of former times, exists, or till the invention of railroads, *did* exist, in certain crack stages of the old North Road ; inns of good dimension and repute, where the mail-coach supped or

dined, and the great northern families stopped to sleep;—where portly sirloins, huge rounds of beef, hams of inviting complexion, fowls, supportable even after those of dainty London, spitch-cocked eels, and compôtes of wine-sours, were evermore forthcoming on demand.

What home-brewed—what home-baked—what cream-cheeses—what snow-white linen—what airy chambers—and what a jolly-faced old gentleman, and comely old gentlewoman, to bid you welcome. It was a pleasure to arrive—a pain to depart. The very Boots seemed to receive his gratuity reluctantly. The waiters *really* wished you a safe and pleasant journey. The chambermaid, after keeping you in hot water during your stay, gave you a warm farewell. There was a barn-yard homeliness of good cheer about the place, how different from the flashy gaudiness of a station-house albergo! One experienced a feeling of cordial good-will towards the broad-faced old gentleman in velveteens and a buff waistcoat who, bowing on his doorstep officiated in such a spot as—the HOTEL-KEEPER.

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY.

OF Private Secretaries there are two species ; the one, a piece of mechanism in the hands of an expert official ; the other, endowed with grace, wisdom, and understanding,—an invisible intelligence, actuating the measures of some nonentity of gentle blood thrust forward in public life upon the pedestal of high connexion.

Among the callings for which a legible hand and decent orthography are supposed to constitute the necessary qualifications, that of the Private Secretary is the most speculative, and least plebeian. The clerk, the usher, are gents or snobs ; the Private Secretary is an esquire and a gentleman. In former times, indeed, none but Statesmen or Ambassadors pretended to retain such onerous appendages in their house-

holds ; and to be even the tag-rag or bob-tail of a plenipo' or a cabinet-minister, afforded a fairer opening for "a genteel youth," than to be a clerk in the Treasury, or at Child's.

But now-a-days every rich man who cannot spell, every itinerant actor, every manager of a theatre, has his private secretary ; and the vocation has, consequently, forfeited caste. If you send to order the dancing-dogs or galante-show to amuse your nursery, you will receive an answer to your verbal message, indited by Signore Katterfelto's private secretary ; while most of the Marchionesses and Countesses, who constitute what is called by the newspapers "the *leaders* of ton," (as though fashionable life were a *drag* !) entertain some hanger-on,—some elderly Miss of good education,—who answers their Almack's notes, and enacts the part of honorary secretary.

The province of the first description of Private Secretary to which we have adverted, the mere pen-in-hand of an expert official, is to indite circulars under dictation, or letters marked "private and con-

fidential," though containing no sort of information susceptible of being divulged; answers to petitions or requests, which convey neither negative nor affirmative,—wordy phrases, intended to engender hope, but which when analyzed are found to contain neither pledge nor promise. A well-trained ministerial secretary will string you together plausible sentences, as boys the empty shells of bird's-eggs,—fair and specious-looking things, filled with innutritious air, and signifying nothing !

Generally speaking, your *very* great man selects for his Private Secretary some honourable nephew or cousin ; partly on the grounds of the Antiquary's adage, that " We give our ain fish-guts to our ain sea-mews ;" and partly for the better assurance of his zeal and trustworthiness, the two noble kinsmen necessarily hanging together, or hanging separately.

But the *active* public man of business, the minister who is not too fine a gentleman to give audience in the first person singular, who wants no showy substitute to bow out the intrusions of faithful public servants

bringing grievances to be redressed, or claims to be examined, usually attaches to himself some intelligent young fellow, with competent knowledge of the law and the world, and spirit to point out a blunder to his employer, as well as the *vous* to detect it.

To such a man, a private secretaryship is a secure stepping-stone to preferment. Brought into collision with the most eminent men of the day, not alone do his faculties become brightened, but he enjoys rare opportunities for their development and exhibition. If clever by nature, it will be his own fault if he do not pass for fifty times cleverer. By modestly keeping in the back-ground while his principal is perpetrating blunders, and afterwards stepping forward adroitly to his extrication, he appears to confer serious obligations ; while his opportunities of lavishing minor favours on less important people, are beyond computation, though not beyond reward. As the Lord commended the unjust steward, the Lords of the Treasury are pretty sure to be humbugged into advancing the unjust Private Secretary of a cabinet minister.

•

Certain it is that these privileged individuals, when *really* of a description to be trusted, — *i. e.* when either honourable cousins or nephews, or approved dirty dogs, — become as rich in unsatisfactory secrets as a confessional or a pawnbroker's books. If the chancellor be the keeper of the King's conscience, *they* hold the tariff of the ministers. Newspaper writers, and getters-up of political memoirs, are fond of talking of "the influence behind the throne," or "back-stairs interposition;" meaning, when the sovereign is a young man, his ladies of the bed-chamber, when a young woman, *her* ladies of the bed-chamber. The Private Secretary constitutes the influence behind the throne, and back-stairs prompter, of the premier; — enjoying opportunities of playing upon the feelings of even the most upright and inflexible of ministers; for Cato himself might have been influenced under certain circumstances by his favourite amanuensis.

There are moments of fatigue, exhaustion, indigestion, impatience, — moments when smarting under a royal reprimand, or atte-

nuated by long fasting, or gorged with turtle and lime-punch, when the strongest ministerial mind becomes most unstatesman-likely enfeebled. At such times, steals in the Private Secretary, sole spectator and sole auditor of the bedrivelment of his patron ; and, like the enemy who intruded into the orchard of the sleeping Hamlet,

Pours into the porches of his ears
A lep'rous distilment.

On the morrow, or on restoration to himself, who is wiser for the fact that the minister has been made a fool of?—The deed is done ! During his fit of weakness he has imbibed an ineffaceable prejudice or erroneous impression. False opinions have taken root in his mind. He displaces the centurion, of whom the private secretary spake reprobatively over-night ; and when the pale petitioner who is to have an audience of him at noon, opens his arduous suit, the unhappy victim finds that his case is prejudged.

On the other hand, if, after an extra glass or two of burgundy, or a royal

audience of a conciliatory nature, or the perusal of a leading article in a leading government paper, laudatory, and not *over*-laudatory of his measures, the minister leaves open the gate of his heart to the advances of his sub, nothing so easy as to seize the occasion for naming names, and recording services of the individuals whom the Private Secretary delighteth to honour. Such golden moments are readily turned to account; and the great man conceives himself to be performing a rigid act of public justice, when, in fact, played upon like a flute by the cunning artist who has found out his stops. The deserving, though obscure individual whom he glories in having snatched into the sunshine of preferment, is no other than the stupid school-chum of his Private Secretary!

Some patrons, whether ministerial, financial, or mercantile men, are careful to employ the hand of a private secretary only in their most moral and translucent transactions. Others keep them precisely for the management of those equivocal negotiations in which they do not choose to

commit themselves, or act as principal. If they cannot afford to keep a conscience, they keep in its place a private secretary to relieve them of their scruples. The minister who has an enormous falsehood to perpetrate, is pretty sure to do the deed of darkness, vicariously, by the hands of a secretary ; and after the fulfilment of such duties, it is astonishing the increase of consequence assumed by the mender of pens, —as though he prided himself on having officiated as a sheet of blotting-paper to the character of his employer.

The office of Private Secretary, by the way, appears to exercise considerable influence over the human nature and constitution. Well do we remember a certain idle schoolfellow of ours, one Tom Grosvenor by name, remarkable at Eton only for his duncehood ; a frank-hearted chap, as much in favour with his fellow-idlers as in disrepute among the dons.

Five years afterwards, occasional glimpses of Tom in the crush-room at the Opera, or lounging along Pall-Mall in the dog-days, exhibited him in the character of a junior

clerk in the Treasury,—idle as ever, listless as ever, ignorant as ever,—but still the same pleasant give-and-take sort of companion,—a bubble on the London stream, likely to evaporate at any hour or moment, and leave not a trace behind.

At that period of his life, Tom was at any man's service; willing to talk, walk, or dine with all and sundry. Not but that he was discriminating enough to dine oftenest where the viands and company were of a daintier description; and though a loungeur in half the houses of the West End, was most assiduous in those having Opera-tickets to give away, or a country-seat to insure him a little pheasant-shooting in the autumn. With all, however, he was the same open-hearted, or rather free-spoken rattle; the rashest and most indiscreet of chatterboxes, whom no one trusted with a secret, seeing that he made no secret of his own.

That such an individual could aspire to the character of a secretary, seemed an absolute perversion of the title; and when, on a sudden change of ministry, the go-

vernment papers announced that Thomas Grosvenor, Esq. had been nominated to the office of Private Secretary by the noble lord at the head of the — department, we agreed, one and all, who had known him at Eton or since, that it could not be *our* Tom.

It was not till, on seeking him at his Treasury desk a few weeks afterwards, we found a still idler fellow than himself warming his nether-man on the hearth-rug, which he had been accustomed to monopolize four hours in the day for eight months in the year, that we granted our credence to the singular promotion of our quondam friend.

How had it been achieved? There was nothing "private or confidential" about Tom, nay, not so much as a legible handwriting in him towards the making of a private secretary; and we were finally forced to admit, on the assurance of his former comrades, that Tom Grosvenor must have been promoted into Thomas Grosvenor and the Red Book, in consideration of his skill in being beaten every

night at chess by the noble lord at the head of the — department, during a snowy Christmas, when they were spending the holidays together at Guzzlinton Park.

Eager to shake him congratulation-wise by the hand, we soon afterwards called at his lodgings. But he was no more to be found there, than in his old quarters at the Treasury. On week-days, this was accountable enough. But his ready adoption of the official habit of rushing out of town on Sundays, appeared at least premature.

Even from the Opera, our former place of rendezvous, he had disappeared,—that is, disappeared from the pit into the rear of certain boxes connected with ministerial life: and instead of showing his nose in the crush-room, he was now only seen by glimpses, hurrying down stairs during the last scene of the ballet, the great lady of some great lord, shuddering at the mere possibility of not escaping into her carriage before the circulation of the vulgar throng.

When at length we *did* meet, plain was

it to be seen that the transformation of Tom into Thomas was not the only one my old schoolfellow had undergone. Instead of the sprawling grasp of former days, given with the right hand or left, as juxtaposition favoured the uncalculated movement, he now advanced his hand perpendicularly, collected into the form of a fish-slice, so as to render a friendly pressure impossible ; nor did his brow unbend or his mouth relax as of old into a spontaneous greeting. On the contrary, his lips appeared as if closed, like a despatch-box, by a spring lock ; and his glance was as frozen as the Guzzlinton lake during the time he used to play chess, or rather be played upon at chess, by his new patron.

Still, the metamorphosis might be purely extrinsic. Tom and ourselves had too often heard the chimes together at midnight, to admit of his becoming Thomas for *us* as readily as for the rest of the world ; and nothing would have been easier than to overturn the pedestal of dignity on which he seemed disposed to establish himself.

Compulsory familiarity, however, was not

what we wanted. A man may be bullied into civility; but becomes an enemy for life to the individual who forces himself on reluctant acknowledgment as a friend. It was a small sacrifice to accept the degree of intimacy the new Secretary chose to assign, and thus perfect our study and contemplation of his character and motives.

At the close of six months, accordingly, we had come to be familiarly admitted into the private room of the Private Secretary—thoroughly behind the scenes, so as to examine at leisure the pulleys and levers by which the machinery was worked. While the vulgar throng, without, was envying the easy and brilliant destinies of Tom, his influential position—his dinners with the political world, and balls with the gay—we had occasion to behold the reverse of the tapestry, by witnessing his toils and labours in a thankless vocation; the affronts he was forced to swallow; the vigils he was obliged to keep; the engagements he was compelled to forego.—Rather would we be a dog and bay the moon, than such a Private Secretary!

It is true that, on the other hand, we saw him assume at certain hours his official consequence, saying to this man "Do!" and he did it; to the other messenger, "Go!" and he went. We watched him mask his visage with that blank and inexpressive vacuity, which an able diplomatist is careful to assume as a vizard, when in contact with intriguing or inquisitive persons. We heard him deny in terms that sounded like assent; and accept, in phrase that sounded like denial.

We have known him reply to, or rather parry with specious and inconclusive generalities, a letter, the contents of which he pretended to have scrupulously examined, but which we knew, from ocular investigation, lay with an unbroken seal within his desk. We have seen him deprecate with bows and congés the wrath of some great man, to whom it was his patron's pleasure to be invisible; or silence, by the coldness and calmness of his reserve, the vituperation of little men to whom he was deputed to convey an open sentence of exclusion.

It was amazing in how short a period he

had acquired all these mysteries of the calling: how spontaneously and familiarly he became acquainted with all the myrmidons of the press; how he carried in his pocket the keys of their consciences, and how thoroughly he understood to which of them to delegate the charge of such and such a question:—to which to apply when it was necessary for the truth to be spoken; to which, when it was judged desirable to throw dust in the staring eyes of the public.

Some editor or other was sure to be either seated authoritatively in the arm-chair of honour of his cabinet, or skulking on his back-stairs. A portion of these were there to pump the Private Secretary, a portion to be pumped. Some, it was his business to cram with false intelligence; while from others, he spared no pains to extract the truth. With one or two, he was courteous even to courtliness; with three or four, coarse almost to brutality.

The whole correspondence of his principal appeared to pass through his hands; though it is likely enough that, while he fancied himself in possession of all his offi-

cial and even ex-official secrets, the specimens which he showed me in attestation of the confidence reposed in him, were by no means those which his patron held nearest his heart.—Nevertheless, the little gilt and perfumed billets concerning which Tom—I beg his pardon,—Thomas Grosvenor, used to consult me while framing a suitable reply, were such as any other man than a minister might have held dear and accounted sacred.

Such touching little appeals, in French, English, and Italian! Such entreaties for an audience, which the gentle dears were careful not to call a rendezvous! Such injunctions to discretion, such adjurations to despatch! Some asking for a secretaryship of legation for a husband, brother, or lover; some simply for a ten pound note for themselves; some imploring for intercession with the Lord Chamberlain for invitations to the royal balls; some demanding as a right the notice of the Court; above all, not a few offering equivalents, and such curious equivalents!—trafficking for coronets, ribands, mitres, baronetcies,

lord-lieutenancies, and commissions with the coin-current of votes in both their Houses, and the tenderest interests of the heart !

One or two were eloquent in reproaches for former benefits forgot ; such as “ *my* lord, who has so zealously supported your administration, to be overlooked when you have had three Garters at your disposal within the last six months !” or, “ I must say it reflects little honour on the justice and equity of government when such services as those of my poor dear Sir Peter, who has not missed a division for the last twenty years, are passed over in the creation of a batch of peers, which includes such individuals as Sir Rumbleberry Cram, and Mr. Swellington Swellington, of Swellington !—But of this, your lordship will hear elsewhere !”

More touching still, such little reproaches as “ *You*, you for whom I have sacrificed, if not my own self-esteem, at least the good opinion of the world (for you well know all that was inferred from your constant visits to our house at Brighton in the

winter of 1818!); *you* to refuse me so trifling a favour as the place of tide-waiter for the son of my butler, that pains-taking, devoted servant, whom you cannot but remember waiting upon you at a period so dangerously important to my domestic happiness!"

That such notes were placed, though marked "private and confidential," in the hands of the Secretary to be answered, did not much surprise me. I was only sorry that similar appeals, with reminders of more recent kindnesses, were not equally at his disposal. There is immense instruction in the "private and confidential" billets-doux correspondence of a cabinet minister! So satisfied is the world of his dispositions for intrigue, that, even in the most trivial matters, he is beset by machinations and cabals. The Countess of —— does not so much as invite him to dinner, without pre-assuring herself by a mysterious missive whom he will be best pleased to meet at her table; whether it suit his will and pleasure to take out the young Marchioness of A——, and

whether he have any objection to her including in her invitations the young and promising Member for Pushinfield! The poor man is not allowed to stir a step, or eat a cutlet, but there are decoys and pitfalls in ambush around him. Against these, one of his surest defences is his Private Secretary.

One day, having an idle hour on our hands, somewhat nearer noon than it is our custom to be met with on the pavé, we took Thomas Grosvenor, Esq. by surprise by an early visit, and were not a little amused to find him busy with scissors and paste; *not* making pincushions for a charity bazaar for New Zealand missionaries, but evidently caught in the toils of authorship. Instantly thrusting his paraphernalia into a drawer, with a most unsecretary-like blush, he denied the hard impeachment. But with one bird's eye view, the state of the case had been discovered. Even then we knew somewhat of the mechanism of book-making, and were satisfied that the manufactory had gained a supernumerary workman.

Luckily for Tom he was enabled to set at nought our officious cross-questioning, by the arrival of the heads of a country church-building deputation ; who came to settle their hour of audience, and send up, in presence of the Secretary, such a pilot-balloon as might fore-arm and forewarn his patron of the object of their mission. For it is seldom the policy of deputations to take the head of a department by surprise. It sounds better in the country to have had their answer delivered to them in good round periods. A crabbed sentence or two, interlarded with ministerial interjections, constitutes a slight thrown upon themselves and their mission.

After remaining an auditor of this gratuitous interview just long enough to admire the skill with which Grosvenor contrived to enhance the ministerial dignity by consulting his note-book as to hours and audiences, (incidentally citing between his teeth appointments with the Chancellor and the Archbishop of Canterbury, princes of the blood, and presidents of academies,) and the still greater art with which by a

word or two thrown out on the question of the objects of the deputation, he gave them to understand that, in the audience, they solicited, it would be unanswerably demonstrated to them that two and two make five,—we thought it decent to withdraw.

A short time afterwards, the town rang with the merits of a new political pamphlet on a popular question, which was pretty generally attributed to the noble ministerial patron of Thomas Grosvenor. The clubs and coteries pronounced it to be an able and luminous performance. The dinner-tables of the West-end went into paroxysms of applause;—for a week, even the entrechats of the favourite danseuse were overlooked.

The reviews, indeed, particularly those opposed to the policy of government, ventured to discover, like Talleyrand of his friend's maiden speech, that it contained many good and new things; but that the good things were not new, or the new things good. They even presumed to point out the origin of its statistics in certain obscure pamphlets—the origin of its ethics

in certain visitation sermons—the origin of its arguments in the parliamentary debates of a preceding session. That these were skilfully put together, they did not deny—*too* skilfully they apprehended for the inexperienced and aristocratic hand of the noble head of the — department. In short, they insisted upon it that some “influence behind the throne” (or desk) had presided over the concoction.

The next time we called upon Tom Grosvenor, (on second thoughts, upon this occasion he saw fit for the first time to return our numerous visits, and call upon ourself,) he avowed himself indignant at the disparaging view taken by the public of the capacity of his noble patron. He assured us, and hinted a wish we would assure others, that his lordship was a man generally underrated,—a man who had distinguished himself at college, and would have equally distinguished himself in Parliament, had not the malice of the fates placed him in precisely that one of the two Houses where his peculiar line of abilities was comparatively unavailable. In short, every word

uttered by the devoted Private Secretary tended to prove that his lordship was the only man in England capable of the authorship of the capital pamphlet of which six thousand had been really sold, and to the last edition of which, "fifteen thousand" was prefixed by way of advertisement.

It was no business of ours. Whether his lordship wrote the pamphlet, or the leading articles that praised it, or the advertisements that puffed, was to us a matter of complete indifference. Nevertheless, since the Private Secretary of an author cannot be supposed to be equally susceptible concerning the merits of a work as the author *in propria persona*, we took occasion, seeing that Tom was in so communicative a vein, to discuss the subject-matter of the pamphlet—to differ from its political views, and play upon its literary pretensions.

Then, indeed, had we occasion to admire the blind and devoted adherency of the Secretary! A high-pressure engine could scarcely have burst with a more alarming explosion. He "begged leave to differ

from us entirely ;” which means that he differed from us *toto cælo* without leave given or taken. From the sucking-dove eloquence of Private Secretaryship, he suddenly thundered into a Boanerges !

As we said before, we cared very little either for the pamphlet or its authorship ; and when Grosvenor quitted the room, contented ourself with self-gratulation that his morning visits were septennial concessions. We could not, however, help recalling to mind the self-command and gentleness of speech with which we had formerly seen him dismiss the intrusions of certain poor relations of his own into his office at the Treasury, (who came to sponge upon him for government stationery,) compared with this vehement outbreak. He appeared to have gained wonderfully in lungs, and lost fearfully in temper, since his transformation into a Secretary.

Six months afterwards, the Gazette announced his promotion to a colonial appointment of weight and responsibility ; and for many following weeks, government paragraphs prated of his audiences with the

Colonial Secretary, and the despatch with which a government steamer had been put in preparation for his departure for his seat of government. On his presentation to kiss hands and take leave of the august face of majesty, he underwent knighthood ; and lo ! the name of " Sir Thomas Grosvenor " became inscribed in the category of public men, upon whose comings and goings it is the delight of the newspapers to expatiate.

From that period, I heard nothing of His Excellency, save when, every couple of months or so, the " organs of government " announced that despatches had been received from him at the Colonial Office ; and once, when a florid article in the Quarterly Review, anent the state and prospects of the obscure island submitted to his legislation, adverted incidentally to the wondrous improvements to which his brief legislation had given rise ; in prose closely akin in style and diction to the renowned pamphlet concerning which we had presumed to differ from the incipient knight.

Prosperity seemed to have laid him asleep.

He was like a gorged boa constrictor. We felt assured that, in ten years' time, Sir Thomas would come back with a liver complaint and claims to a pension,—marry the daughter of some Scottish Earl,—get into Parliament and the Carlton; and subside into a pursy, prosy, middle-aged gentleman; converting, perhaps, his knighthood into a baronetcy in the crush of some coronation batch.

But ministries, like captains, are casual things; and it fell out that the patron of Sir Thomas and his colleagues, were among the breakages of the day;—swept from the surface of official life by one of the whirlwinds that occasionally arise in even the best regulated kingdoms.

Other patrons emitted prose and preferment in their place—which knew them no longer; and in the course of the session following their downfall, among their protégés chosen out to become marks for parliamentary pecking, in proof of the corruption and incompetency of their administration, was the luckless Sir Thomas Grosvenor!—

A crack speech, got up for the especial purpose, pointed out his seat of government as the head-quarters of jobbery and abuse. The absent are always in the wrong—the feeble have no friends. Unluckily, the Ex-secretary had a few, of the kind which wise men pray to be delivered from!—His former patron took up his cudgels precisely in the style to bring down upon both the severest retaliation. Sir Thomas Grosvenor was recalled. Sir Thomas Grosvenor had to answer for himself in pamphlets and petitions—too happy to escape the bar of the House. It was in vain he appealed to the party whose patronage had hatched him into existence. Of that existence, they affected to be scarcely cognizant. “Who *was* this Sir Thomas Grosvenor? Oh yes! they recollected. Formerly Private Secretary to their friend the Marquis; a useful young man enough, whose services government had liberally rewarded. Pity that he should have been placed in a situation to which his abilities and experience were unequal!—Sir Thomas Grosvenor had committed their party—and of Sir Thomas

Grosvenor, consequently, for his sake and their own, for the future, the less said the better."

"From the party quoad party I could have borne all this!" observed my old schoolfellow, when, with a shaking hand and jaundiced complexion, he sat beside me, telling me his doleful story. "But that man, whom I so diligently served, and who swore he would peril soul and body to serve me in return,—that man, whose official blunders I screened—whose speeches I made—whose pamphlet I wrote!—Little, very little, does the world conjecture the severe labour and dirty work that enters into the duties of a PRIVATE SECRETARY."

END OF VOL. I.

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SKETCHES
OF
ENGLISH CHARACTER.

BY MRS. GORE,

AUTHORESS OF

"MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS," "THE DOWAGER,"
"PEERS AND PARVENUS," &c.

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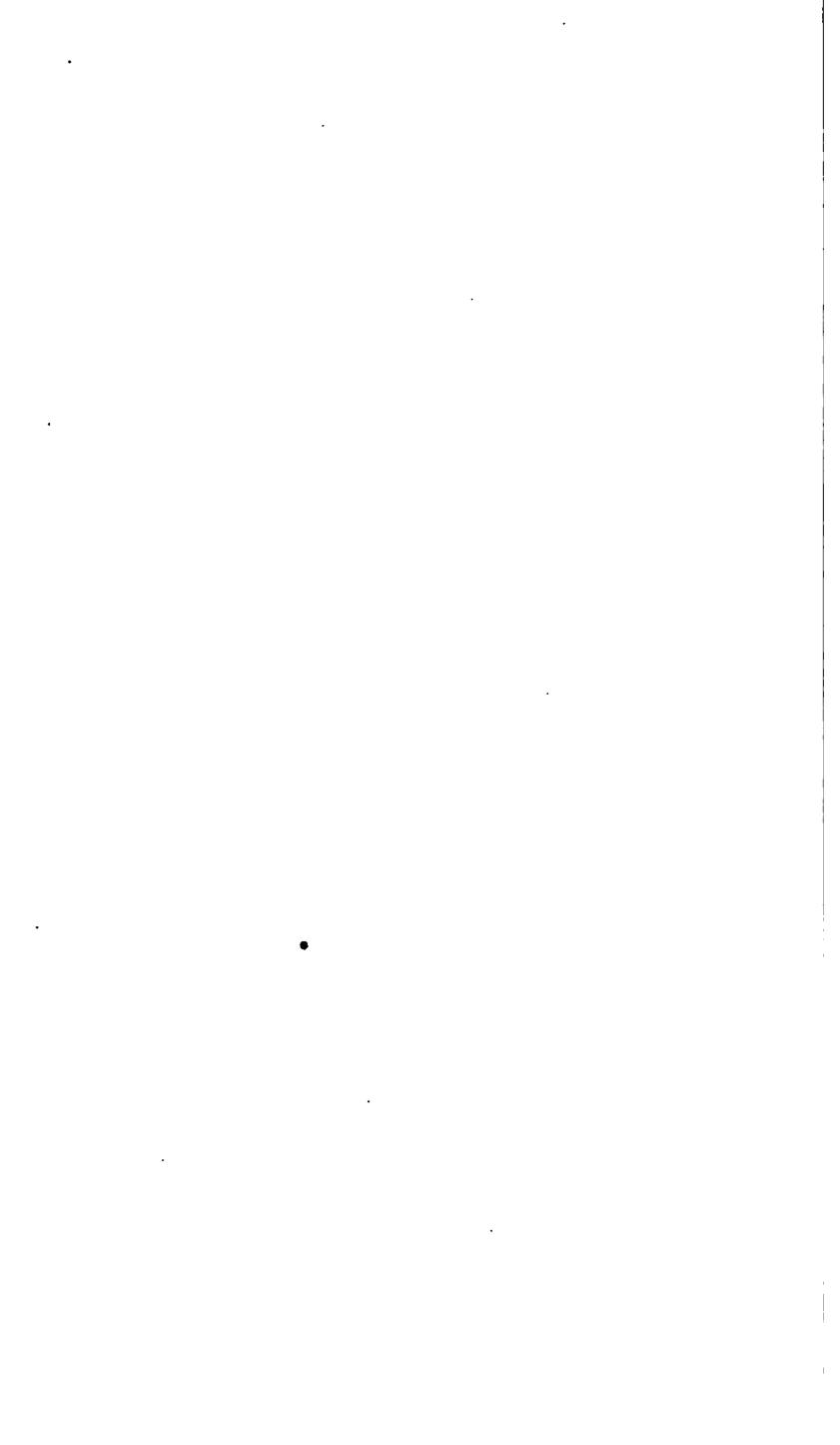


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SKETCHES
OF
ENGLISH CHARACTER.

THE LADY PATRONESS.

A LADY PATRONESS is a woman preferred above her sex, in deference to those influences of rank, fortune or fashion, which intitle her to fleece the opulent for the benefit of the indigent;—a chartered mendicant at second hand,—a privileged beggar in the service of the less privileged poor.

High station and a low mind are indispensable to the success of such a vocation; a vocation more rarely embraced for conscience sake, than at the instigation of some active philanthropist, who plays upon the weakness of the great lady, and engages her services in behalf of more deserving persons.

He assures her that the “importance of

her ladyship's name—the influence of the high estimation in which her ladyship is held by the public—the attraction of her ladyship's beauty, wit, or accomplishments," cannot fail to draw purchasers to her bazaar, or subscribers to her list; whereupon the idle woman of fashion renounces her devotion to the *sacro santo far niente*, and becomes transformed into a woman of business;—an inditer of begging letters, not liable to the prosecutions of the Mendicity Society;—a canvasser, reversing all ordinary forms of corruption.

That species of moral courage which the profane call impudence, is a first-rate requisite in the Lady Patroness. She must be as fearless in attack as steady in defence. *She* must NOT "bear her faculties meekly;" but brandish her coronet like a weapon of offence, in order to accomplish her purposes. A moderately important personage venturing to beset your privacy with petitions for Poles, or tickets for benefit concerts, would be dismissed as a bore, or insulted as a nuisance. But a begging marchioness!—A gaberlunzie woman having all the glories of the

Herald's College emblazoned on the panels of her carriage!—No resisting such an appeal;—no denying a petitioner whose tall footmen with their cocked-hats and gold-headed-canes, seem prepared to knock you down in case of resistance.

So fine a lady has only to look fierce and persevere, to extract the sovereigns from your purse, and keep the strings of her own Gordianly knotted.

The Lady Patroness is usually selected from among noble matrons between thirty and threescore years of age, who are destitute of offspring upon whom to wreak the irritabilities of their leisure; Countesses who have no daughters to manœuvre for; Viscountesses who have no aspiring sons with electioneering interests to be kept up; busy, stirring souls, never weary of writing three-cornered notes to their intimates, and four-cornered to the destined victims of their beneficent spoliations; eloquent missives enclosing concert-bills, tickets for fancy fairs, bazaars, or balls;—cajoling or bullying, according to the temper or station of the recipient.

Some tact is of course indispensable in the composition of these appeals. The begging-letter impostor, whose seal bears the impress of a coronet, is, or ought to be, aware that the rich director's wife in Portland-place, or the Irish member's in Eaton-square, must be addressed in a very different tone from the poor ensign of the Coldstream, in his lodgings in Bury-street, St. James's.

Mrs. Croesus must be wooingly entreated ; —must be melted with civilities ; —must be bamboozled by a list of honourable and right honourable subscribers, whose high-sounding benefactions are intended to point out the amount of her expected gratuity. She must be made to imagine that the patronage of bishops and archbishops, duchesses or ministers of state, will be unavailing to the highly-deserving institution suing for her patronage, unless *her* respectable name be added to the catalogue of its well-wishers. Five guineas' worth of *her* influence in the eyes of the world, will do more for the bankrupt dispensary, or the widow of some foreign fiddler, than the hundreds or fifties of less deserving patrons. And after listening with suitable

respect to "*Madamina il catalogo è questo*," how can Mrs. Moorshedabad, or Lady O'Donahoo, do less than enclose a cheque on their husband's banker in return, admitting the eloquence of the Lady Patroness to be irresistible?—

With some ambitious cornet of the household brigade, some slender guardsman, or much enduring clerk in the Treasury, she assumes a loftier attitude; "presents her compliments," as she would present a pistol to his breast, and bids him "stand and deliver" his one-pound one, or *withstand* her at his peril.

The apprehension of forfeiting his annual sixteenth of one of her ladyship's dinners (including turtle, spring chickens, green goose, and the company of the beauty or wit in vogue), determines the poor fellow to submission. He swallows Signor Humbuginbach's concert, for the sake of the hock and claret by which he humbly trusts it will be washed down; or subscribes his sovereign (a mighty mite to a young gentleman rejoicing in an income of 180*l.* per annum, washing included) for the benefit of the

missionaries of Owhyhee, secretly hoping that her ladyship will be pleased to reward his munificence with an opera ticket or so, in the course of the season.

But if, after presenting her compliments to him on the Saturday, the Lady Patroness choose to cut his acquaintance—the unkindest cut of all—in Kensington-gardens on the Sunday, the subscriber has no title to complain. In appealing so familiarly to his feelings, like Thomas Thumb in the tragedy, her ladyship

Did her duty, and she did no more.

She was civil only in her vocation,—gracious only as a Lady Patroness.

In London life, patronessship is a matter of election. Among the two thousand noble or wealthy ladies whose names are supposed to lend grace to a subscription, or whose equipages seen waiting at the private door of a Hanover-square bazaar, are known to increase its congregation of powdered footmen and wiggly body-coachmen, it is something to be solicited as sponsor for the nursling institution, or starveling charity-school. In the

country, on the contrary, it is a thing of inheritance.

The great lady of any neighbourhood, whether a seventy-four duchess, or a gun-brig baronet's wife, becomes, as a matter of course, patroness of whatever attempts are to be made on the indulgence of the provincial public; nay, even the mayor's lady, in a country town, ascends the throne by right divine, failing higher branches in the succession.

If a benefit play be bespoken (the tragedy of "Hamlet" or of "Macbeth" for instance, with the parts of the royal Dane, or disloyal Thane omitted by particular desire), she occupies the box of honour for the exclusive enjoyment of the float of tallow-candles, in order that the Mrs. Diapers and Miss Figs of the Market-place, may be persuaded to vouchsafe the light of their countenances and price of their tickets. The playbills must be headed under the immediate patronage of—no matter who—the greatest lady of the place; or the Brummagem Macready will open his mouth, and the manager his doors in vain. No Lady Patroness—no receipt!

Again, you might as well place the plate at a cathedral-door on a kettle-trivet, as in the hands of a pew-opener or churchwarden. A polite congregation loves to bestow its shillings and sixpences upon a charmer in a lilac satin-pelisse, with French flowers in her bonnet. The Lady Patroness never looks more exquisite than when standing in the porch of an old country-church, receiving the copper contributions and curtsies of the poor old women in their red cloaks, who are willing to sacrifice their weeks' tobacco towards rebuilding the organ-loft; little surmising that the cost of the whole undertaking does not equal the value of the Brussels lace veil of the lady who smiles so eloquent an appeal to their magnanimity. The harangue from the pulpit, the private badgering of the parish-clerk, had failed to convince them.—But who is to resist the elegance and affectation of the Lady Patroness?—

There are necessarily Lady Patronesses of all sorts and sizes, sects and opinions. The serious Lady Patroness,—the great lady of Exeter Hall,—the Madonna Laura of the

Petrarchs in buzz-wigs,—the blue of Rivingtons and Hatchards,—is the Hecuba of the tribe.

A degree of respectability is attached to her rustling skirts, which ought to render them arrow-proof against the shafts of ridicule, even as the mail of a crusader—or scales of a crocodile. Her charity, unlike the charity that begins at home, is of the comprehensive species that wafts an obolus from Indus to the Pole, in order to furnish missionaries for the dusty tribes of heathen-esse, and a maintenance for the still darker tribes lacking employment in the overstocked market of piety in Great Britain.

Seldom, it is true, do we hear of these charitable dames taking out two-pence and giving them to the host, in behalf of some needy wayfarer of the laity: more rarely still, of their exercising their influence in society for the benefit of some victim of its injustice, its pride or prejudice. When slanders and scandals darken the atmosphere, they are fain to let the wicked world have its way; unless when that way can be invaded by the thousand-parson force of prejudices

stronger and more powerful still; crushed by the Thor-like hammer of a hierarchy, or brought down by the long rifle of a backwoodsman, taking his sly aim from behind the whited wall of evangelism. Devoid of all pretence to the heavenly meekness of genuine Christianity, the serious Lady Patroness is "puffed up,"—"vaunteth herself,"—and (under correction), "*doth* behave herself unseemly."

Next comes the political Lady Patroness; the distributor of election ribbons, and other party gewgaws; the accredited monsterer of nothings inaudible in the gallery, lisped by the pap-boat members. Instead of the heaps of tracts, damp from the press, which moisten the carriage-cushions of the serious Lady Patroness, the morocco swabs of the political Lady Patroness are encumbered by the dog's-eared pages of some dry pamphlet,—the last "striking effort" of the newest man of genius forced into bloom in the succession-house of her party.

By vocation a fetcher and carrier of paper place-traps, she takes care to have the useful passages scored in pencil by the author, for

the benefit of the minister's private secretary; and the objectionable ones scored in red ink by the minister's private secretary, for the instruction of the aspiring author. Not unfrequently, the said author in his proper person usurps the place of his work, and is dawdled about in morning visits from house to house, in those environs of Belgrave-square or Carlton-terrace, which enshrine the penates of the great men of Downing-street.

Next follows the literary Lady Patroness; a variety of the lion-feeder, — saving that her lions are fed, like courtiers, “promise cramm’d!”—The literary Lady Patroness is a jackal to the annuals and other miscellanies of polite literature. She it is who provides a place in the alms-houses of the arts, for Lord Thomas's verses, or Lady Sarah's sketches; thereby eliciting the eternal gratitude of the editor, proprietor, printer, and binder of the golden library of the tabbies. She it is, whose *conversazione* confers immortality on the unknown epic, and crowns with bays the prose of the poet and the poets of the prosy.

Whereas the serious Lady Patroness is "an old woman clothed in gray," the literary one is usually a young one enrobed in cerulean blue. Mild as Helicon, she eschews the noisy gabble of her political rival, who appears to be over-talking a debate; and is measured in her dicta, and few and far between in her arbitrements, even as the solemn minute-guns of a quarterly review, compared with the squibbing of a daily paper. Her gentle dulness recoils from the hurry and bustle of the great lady of the hustings; and, "like the fat weed that rots itself at ease on Lethe's wharf," she is usually to be found lolling dozily on the cushions of her boudoir, with the last volume of her latest *protégé* drooping from her hand!

Never, however, does she fail to avail herself of your visit, to victimize you in favour of some subscription work, or theatrical benefit—enabling you to see Shakspeare murdered in cold blood, at the cost of two pounds two, per hour. She is sure to have some Miss Seraphina Snobbs,—“some virgin tragedy, some orphan muse,”—to entrust to

your sympathies. As a counterbalance to the enormous weight of advice wherewith she loads her unoffending *protégés*, she heaps up for their credit the halfcrowns and half-sovereigns extorted from her friends, to be lumped into the subscription list as "Nine pounds eleven shillings and fourpence collected by the Right Honourable the Countess of Indigo;" beating out the gold of others into thin leaf, in order to gild the pill of her bitter counsel.

Last comes the fashionable Lady Patroness,—the dispenser of gentility,—the fountain of honour to the nobodies,—the grandee who buoys up with empty bladders the novice wading a first attempt in that sea of troubles, the ocean of the great world.

We speak not of the Lady Patronesses of Almack's. Everybody who knows anything—that is, anybody who knows everybody—is aware that Almack's is an elective monarchy, an irresponsible sovereignty;—that its chief magistrates are great unpaid, whose labour, like virtue, is its own reward; and whose reward, like Virtue's, is too apt

to be pain and grief. Those ædiles of the *beau monde*, therefore, who, after giving themselves such infinite trouble, find it so difficult to give satisfaction to the wicked and perverse generation of fashionable life, ought to be sacred objects in the eyes of the profane.

The fashionable Lady Patroness whom *we* would render "a fixed figure for the hand of scorn to point its slow unmoving finger at," is the *would-be* fine lady who tenders her services to the *will-be* fine lady, to help her up the ladder of west-end notoriety;—who makes out visiting lists for those who want to visit everybody, and whom nobody cares to visit;—who weeds the acquaintance of new people, and "hints a fault and hesitates dislike," whenever the giver of balls suggests the name of an untitled friend; insisting that the whole tribe of country cousins shall be cut, without conscience or compunction.

The fashionable Lady Patroness has an overflowing list of mantua-makers, milliners, hairdressers, and the general commissariate of the toilet, all "by appointment to" her noble self, and consequently unrivalled.—

Such recommendations, if they do not cause a discount to be abstracted from her bill, intitle her to be served quicker and cheaper, than other customers, in consideration of the number of family coaches she brings in succession to the door.

It is true her pet shoemaker is little better than a cobbler ;—but then he is “such a civil creature !”—her court dressmaker little better than a sempstress ;—but then she is “so wonderfully cheap !” And so omnipotent is the power of puffing in this our age of charlatanism, that, by dint of praising and pushing them on, the cobbler and sempstress undertaken by the fashionable Lady Patroness, if they do not learn to make shoes or gowns, invariably contrive to make fortunes.

The fashionable Lady Patroness is a pearl, richer than all her tribe,—the only Lady Patroness seen to fatten on her vocation. The missionaries and dispensaries,—the under secs and pamphleteers,—the ballad-mongers and annual-spinners, give in return for the exertions of *their* protectresses the breath of praise in exchange for the breath

of praise,—incense for incense ; or, as Lear hath it, “nothing for nothing.” But the fashionable Lady Patroness obtains solid pudding in exchange for *her* empty praise. The fashionable Lady Patroness has a corner kept for her at the dinner-table for which she has engaged the French cook, and invited the English guests. She is implored to come and meet the duchess whom she has manœuvred into gracing the feast with her presence. She is assured that she must be at hand to do the honours of the ambassador who is to do her particular friends the honour of eating their turtle and venison. She must taste the hock purveyed by her own purveyor ;—she must give her opinion of the ice tickled up by a Gunter of her own invention ;—she must witness the first attempt out of livery of the clodpole she has disciplined into butlership ;—she must help to take the shine out of the service of plate for which she furnished the design.

Nay, some of the forced peaches must be placed in her carriage which were provided, half-a-crown apiece below market price, by the fruiterer who furnishes her own unri-

valled desserts. She must be at hand to set forth the merits of the three courses, with a theatrical aside of

Que ça est bon !—Ah ! goûtez ça !—

This jelly 's rich,—this malmsey's healing ;

and all “furnished at the inexplicably low price of one pound seven-and-sixpence a-head, by a very clean, honest, little man, whom I employ for all my own dinners; and who is getting on so wonderfully that he will not undertake so much as a *fricandeau* under six weeks' notice !”

Such is the dainty dame in whom officiousness becomes a virtue, per force of the exigencies of lady patronesship;—such the charming extortioner who, like a brilliant parasite plant entwining a tree to its perdition, ruins one with caresses. Her kindness is a gnawing worm ; her friendship a perpetual blister. Like the daughters of the horse-leech, her cry is “Give, give, give !” an appeal difficult to *forgive*, when repeated with such “damnable iteration.”

She will not leave to her victims so much as the virtue of generosity to call their own :

rendering them unwilling benefactors of the humble poor,—unwilling acquaintances of the presuming rich.—

But *basta!* Another word, and we should be accused of painting a portrait, instead of sketching at random the peculiarities of the fashionable LADY PATRONESS.

THE CLUB MAN.

IN the hope of producing a definition of a CLUB worthy the lexicographic pen of the great Johnson, we have been sitting for some minutes, our chin resting on our hand, our elbow on our desk, and a face as long as that of a physician in consultation, or a donkey over a gate.

But it may not be. Chaos itself is not more unsusceptible of terse and compact illustration. The definition of a club, to be really definitive, must be couched in Thompsonian rather than Johnsonian English; or, in other words, must be vulgar, diffuse, and a bundle of contradictions. For clubs are as many-sided as any of the great political questions viewed and reviewed by those parliamentary tyros of the day, who

mistake every gradation of prismatic tincture for a new and distinct colour. But let us remember that we have promised to be Thompsonian, and eschew fine writing.

We were about to enter upon the description of a club, having the bow-window of White's in our mind's eye; that elect and select concentration of the finer, if not more refined particles of society, too conscious of their value to waste themselves by amalgamation with the mass of human nature; a measure of thrice-winnowed corn, whereof every grain has its separate existence, secured in a casket of club-exclusiveness, like the Crown jewels behind their iron-grating in the Tower, or Thompsonianly speaking, like the daily bread behind the barred windows of a *boulangier* in the panivorous kingdom of France.

But the definition of a club, thus derived, would be White's by itself—White's; *the* club from which men have died of exclusion, as Keats, of the Quarterly,—killed on the spot by a black-ball; *the* club where, in dandy existence, “either you must live or have no life;” where everything thought may

be said, because thought only by right-thinking people ; but where nothing said should be repeated elsewhere, lest it tend to a too speedy civilization of the common herd of mankind.

But, to have presented the sketch of this Eleusinian temple of fine gentlemanism as the portrait of a London club,—to have enlarged upon its unostentatious but luxurious arrangements, its combination of jockeyism and politics, Old England and Young England,—nay, to have jolted in the carriages and horses waiting before its door, sound, solid, and impeccable in taste, because a matter of service rather than of vulgar ostentation,—and immediately afterwards conducted some inexperienced foreigner to the flashy fashionability of Crockford's, or the dull humdrumery of Trafalgar Square, as brethren of the same family, would have sorely discredited our discernment.

There are, in fact, as many classes of clubs, as of society. England is the land of clubs. A club is a natural excrescence of English life, as the gall-apple on the oak. Introduced into other countries, the system has been

rarely known to flourish ; and you might as well expect a really clubbish French or Russian club, composed of natives, as an authentic oak-apple grown on an elm or alder. No nation but the English is capable of the social solecism of excluding women from their society, as a matter of luxury. No other nation finds delight in the freedom from restraint engendered by the absence of the gentler sex. No other nation makes a boast of its satisfaction in dirty boots, coarse language, cigars, and their adjuncts. Such things find open favour in America ; but, when enjoyed in any civilized country, it is, and ought to be, in fellowship with the people, rather than in the exclusive sanctity of club retreat.

Not but that, with all this seeming misogyny, John Bull entertains as high a reverence as his politic neighbours of the continent for the petticoated moiety of human nature. But his veneration is so great that it assumes the sanctity of altar-worship. While admitting woman to be a divinity, he chooses to conceal his idol in the Holy of Holies of domestic life. Duly to enjoy the society of Mrs.

Bull, he chooses a smoking tureen, and cod's-head and shouldrs to intervene between them ; and their olive-branches to be around their table. Then, after prosing her into a becoming doze by the narrative of his morning's occupations, whether of business or idleness, the club man leaves her to the enjoyment of her arm-chair, takes his hat, hurries into his Brougham, and off to his whist and evening paper, secure from the intrusion of the sex!—

For John adores woman in the singular, and hates her in the plural ; John *loves*, but does not *like*. Woman is the object of his passion, rarely of his regard. There is nothing in the gaiety of heart or sprightliness of intellect of the weaker sex, which he considers an addition to society. To *him* women are an interruption, both to business and pleasure.

The play of features, the graceful countenance, the sweetness of voice and expression, which lend a charm in foreign countries to the conversation of the fair, are, in fact, too often wanting among ourselves. English women, certified before hand that the men with

whom they are discoursing feel them to be a bore, and are waiting for an opportunity to steal off to their clubs, become dull and dispirited ; either too proud to fight against the attraction of the smoking-room and whist-table, or depressed by the suspicion that all they are saying will be turned into ridicule by the habitual scoffery of a club man.

The evil is, consequently, one of re-action ; and reproduces itself so effectively, that, year after year, new clubs arise to dignify the purlieus of Pall Mall, and assign the ladies of London a still more Turkish subjection of mind and habits. On the whole, we are not sure but that the sex enjoys higher honour in the harems of Constantinople than in the drawing-rooms of London ; being guarded in the one as a precious treasure ; in the other, treated like a piece of ornamental china, pretty, fragile, useless,—not worth locking up, only because of insufficient value to become an object of temptation,—and which the owner is sure to find glittering on his chimney-piece, on his return from his club.

At the commencement of the present century, London contained a scarcely larger al-

lotment of clubs than at the commencement of the century preceding. The intervening age, of a peculiarly domestic character, engendered little to demand an extension of the Will's and Button's, the chocolate-houses and coffee-houses, where people loved to prose in public, and obtain by talking the reputation now sought in print. At that period, the fashionable institutions of the day partook of a French rather than an English character. Almack's, at first accounted a club, comprised both sexes in its lists, as attested by the letters of Horace Walpole ; and the pleasures of the Pantheon and Ranelagh were neither exclusive nor misogynic.

But, with the political fervour awakened by the French Revolution, arose a new order of things. Society was in a state of ferment. The leading politicians of the day experienced the desire of prolonging in social life the discussions for which the long ears of parliament were insufficient. The ferocity of Whigism and Toryism became incompatible with petticoat presence; and, in order to call names and bandy arguments to their hearts' content, the clubs of the day were made the

arena of its political warfare. Already, the fashion-seeking Heir-apparent had imparted a certain vogue to the clubs of St. James's Street; and, as they affected the gallantry of celebrating public events by brilliant fêtes, there was still absolution for them from the hands of beauty.

The excitement arising from public causes soon became perceptible in the enactments of social life. Desperate play was made to succeed to furious argumentation. The frame of society was out of joint; and a variety of changes, "pleasant, but wrong," began to diversify the monotony of London life. Suffice it to consider those which attach to the natural history of the Club.

From that period, to belong to Brookes's or White's was a declaration of political opinion. But whereas politics and play, however necessary their excitement to palates satiated by the enjoyments of luxury or lost in the enervation of aristocratic leisure, appear to the more sober-sided class of the community, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," (that is, nothing but what is offensive and pernicious,)—Boodle's and Arthur's were

made to concentrate a highly-estimable order of London kind. The Cocoa Tree extended its window to faces of insufficient interest to appear behind the panes of White's; and, by degrees, the dull Albion and solemn Alfred afforded a refuge for the solid sense of professional, and the drowsiness of middle-aged men.

Nothing could be more eminently respectable than the new clubs. The epidemic of witty sarcasm lingered like a malaria at White's; while the growing dissipations of the times created for themselves a glowing focus at Watier's. But there was a world elsewhere; a world of buzz-wigs and solemnity, so becomingly behind the maddening race of the times, that one day, when Canning, in the zenith of his fame, dropped into the house-dinner at the Alfred, so pure were the eleven worthy individuals of whom it was composed, from the sophistications of the West End world, that, on the departure of the stranger, each loudly expressed his wonder " *Who* that *very* agreeable man could be?"

By this time, the rage for clubs had become a sort of bubble speculation. On the re-

opening of the Continent at the close of the war, travelled Englishmen became for the first time aware of the insufficiency of tavern accommodation in this metropolis. The excellent *restaurants* and brilliant *cafés* of Paris inspired them with contempt for the "tough and scorched mutton" of the Piazza, or British; and, conscious of the necessity of reform, they wisely judged that a better *cuisine*, combined with a more auspicious *locale*, might be obtained by New Harmonizing their hunger, thirst, and love of newspapers, by the institution of additional clubs.

The places in White's window, or Brookes's whist tables, were becoming as hereditary as the stations of beggars in the streets of old Madrid; and the soldier and sailor, the lawyer and physician, the painter and architect, no less than the country baronet and estated esquire, began to feel it indispensable severally to secure a cenobitium for his leisure, or a retreat against the bickerings of domestic life. Under this club-making influence, Pall Mall grew and grew, and Charing Cross gaped with an extended yawn to make way for a succession of palaces; till King Charles must

have wondered on his brazen steed what could possibly be going on behind his back.

The United Service, University, Athenæum, Union, and many more, vied with each other in the richness of their furniture, and commodiousness of their arrangements. Eventually, the Carlton and Reform clubs set up their rival nurseries of political corruption and legalized illegality. The Travelers' spread its tent for the benefit of foreign wanderers in the deserts of London, and such as are fond of cultivating their society; Crockford having already upraised a pandemoniacal temple on a scale of brilliancy and free-and-easiness, such as might have called up the shades of Buckingham, Rochester, and Killigrew, to preside over its committee.

From that period, the utmost club-wants of the metropolis may be said to have been appeased. Others have arisen, and are arising, as offsets shoot up from every oak, but of neither value nor moment; and it is now apparent that the mania has reached its climax; for several of the older clubs have been on the eve of bankruptcy, and several others compelled to make the acquaintance of

those strange bedfellows said to be the inseparable companions of misery. Even White's was for a moment brought down from its stilts; and after straining for years at gnats, compelled to swallow more than one camel; albeit the fluctuations of fashion and disorganization of Crockford's consequent on the retirement of the proprietor, has restored to its more classical rival its privilege of gnat-straining.

The region of the clubs now constitutes an almost admitted quarter of the town; and if London had ever the audacity to contend with St. Petersburg for the title of City of Palaces, or with Paris for architectural distinction, the pretension would rest far more decently on the splendour of its clubs, than of its royal residences or national museums and academies. The Vitruvian *façade* of the Reform Club is one of the boasts of the West End.

The habitual London loungeur is, probably, an incompetent judge of the merits of these mammoth establishments; with their enormous cellars, their ogre-like kitchens, and daily hecatomb; their regiments of scullions,

and light-infantry brigade of waiters. It is only by sojourn in cities where clubs are rare or inaccessible, that we are enabled to estimate the advantage thus afforded to men of moderate means, destitute of a domestic establishment. Those who have neither lares nor penates ought to be permitted to worship the club.

The monastic and scholastic institutions of our ancestors, however, partook not of a more decidedly anti-matrimonial character. The monk or fellow of a college, is not a more obstinate bachelor than the regular club man. Therein is his city of refuge; therein abides his palladium. *There* does the cold man,—the reserved man,—the selfish man,—the dull man,—create an ample field for the cultivation of his egotism;—*there* does the woman-hater find elbow-room for his hatred, and the woman-lover a case-mated refuge from his love.

The Club-man is in a position to resist the tyrannies of mother, sister, wife, or mistress. The snail, or tortoise, in its shell, enjoys no surer impunity. Hunt down your victim as ye will, ye women of little faith, he defies

you at last by earthing himself in the sanctuary of his club. *There*, he may eat, drink, read, play, from morning till the morning following. There, you cannot deprive him of his billiards, cannot disturb his whist, cannot interdict his cigar, cannot want the first volume of the novel he has just opened, or torment him by looking over his shoulder when absorbed in the debate, or remind him of the gout when enjoying his turtle, or talk of cupping, when the glass of madeira is at his lips.—There, he may eat his asparagus “*tout à l’huile !*”—*There*, he may pepper his cream-tart!—*There*, he may damn the sex, and be happy !

It is often contended by women, on the other hand, that the advantage is reciprocal ; that the man capable of finding his happiness in a club is unworthy to enjoy it elsewhere ; and that those who expend the greater portion of their day in laying down the law at a club, or accepting the law when laid down by the council of ten into which every club resolves its conscript fathers, constitute precisely the bores from whose company society ought to render thanks for deliverance.

According to these fair jurists, the clubs form an invaluable safety-valve for the effervescence of ill-humour, such as serves to relieve many a deserving family from its domestic tyrant; and the stingy sensualist, who writes his letters at his club, luxuriating there in the newspapers and periodicals he refuses to his family-circle at home, spunging on its snuff-box, and gathering up its crumbs of comfort, would only contribute the growl of a bear to the colloquialities of his fireside.

Be it established as a rule, therefore, that the man who is a club-fixture, who dines there more than three days in the week, or sulks there more than three hours in the morning, is one little cared for elsewhere. It is as rare to find one of the favourites of society club-logged, as it is indispensable for even the most popular man to appear, for twenty minutes of every day, at the club in fashion.

For clubs, like dogs, have their day. During a Whig administration, for instance, the Carlton was the thing. A party in opposition is an united party; weakened by no jealousies, disturbed by no mistrustings.

Aware that it is only by a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether that the common object can be achieved, every man flatters himself that, when its head shall be premier, he shall be secretary of state. No snarler on his own side is rash enough to probe his vanity ; no superior man pretends to gainsay his assertion. Everybody is in the right, because all are in the wrong. All is hypothesis, all is expectation ; and the club, concentrating the "noes" against any existing government, comprises the *élite* of a party,—a body of men active in talk, because timid in action,—vivacious, brilliant, and compact.

But, no sooner does the party attain office, than the club becomes divided against itself. Petty feuds and discontents arise. The court-cards of the pack are too much in request in higher places, to have leisure for club-lounging ; and the deuces and trays are sulky on finding themselves discarded from the winning hand. The club has no longer a common aim. It is composed of men striving to outwit each other on the course of preferment, and out-talk each other in the gabble of debate. The same men who, a

few months before, crossed the threshold as if throwing themselves into the arms of their family, with open hearts and familiar voices, have now come to regard it as an enemy's camp, and become cynical or taciturn. They husband their anecdotes for the minister from whom they have hopes. They reserve their information for the member to whom they are jackal. They lay by their wit for their own speeches, their criticisms for those of others. The Carlton of to-day is, consequently, no longer what it was some sessions ago. The crest of many a cockatoo is depressed; the wing of many a goose has been stripped of its pen-feathers; nay, the swan has turned out a goose, and the game-cock been over-crowded by the pert bantam!—The Carlton club is now laid nearly as low as Carlton House.

But even as one club differeth from another in glory, one may be said to form the peristyle to another; while some assume importance when conjoined with others, which, singly, have little credit. As the name of John becomes aristocratic when coupled with Lord, though vulgar in a footman, it is good

to be a member of Crockford's, if you are authenticated in society as belonging to White's, Brookes's, or The Travellers'; but scampish, if you belong to Crockford's alone. The Athenæum, on the other hand, is a sort of neutral territory, where the learned in law, physic, or divinity, the arts, or the sciences, go to criticise all that is said, done, or projected in other clubs, and other places;—to review the newspapers, and talk leading articles on the debates;—a club of big-wigs, as the former of empty pates.—

White's we have presumed to define as of somewhat dowagerly dandyism, its door abounding in Broughams rather than cabs, and having ten boiled chickens to one *à la Tartare*, in the daily *menu* of its private dinners. On entering the room, you hear people complain of the draught, and hint at rheumatism. In process of time, it will grow as fusty as Boodle's; and when its present sable-silvered heads shall have become white as the poll of Polonius, panada and toast and water will probably succeed to *riz à la Turque* and Badminton mixture, in its daily fare.

The flash of fashion of the day decidedly rests with Crockford's.* Hazard has, of course, its part in this, but cookery more; and the dynasty which came in victorious with Ude, holds its own with honour under Francatelli. Crockford's is the finish of every fashionable day. After the dull family-dinner,—after the opera,—the soirée,—nay, after the brilliant ball terminating at five o'clock in the morning, it is still necessary to smoke a cigar on the steps of Crockford's. It is there the crocodile's eggs of those airy nothings, the scandals of the hour, are hatched into existence. It is there reports originate,—it is there the petty spite of society find vent in barbed words. If White's be the pleasanter dining-house, for supper there is only Crockford's. The effervescence of folly's fermentations explode nowhere with a smarter detonation. To a man between thirty and fifty, *sans* White's, *point de salut*. But there is no salvation, between twenty and thirty, for a young fellow who does not run the daily gauntlet of Crockford's. It is there the rust of homeliness will be

* This sketch was written five years ago.

soonest rubbed off. It is there he will get rid of his inconvenient sense of right and wrong, and learn to mistake black for white, as well as to discriminate between *rouge et noir*. At Crockford's, he will make pleasant acquaintances; and enable himself to discard his friends and disown his relations.

Of all the juries into which society resolves itself, the verdict of the clubs goes farthest, perhaps, in determining a man's character, and assessing the value of his understanding. Half of the untraceable opinions of society emanate from these masculine strongholds, like the mephitic gas engendered by the Grotta del Cane. No one can exactly say who decided the great Sophronius to be a pedant and a bore. It is a fact that few would have dared be the first to whisper in Grosvenor Square, or write from some aristocratic Castle. But, by a simultaneous murmur of the Carlton, Boodle's, and Arthur's, oppressed each in turn by the burthen of his company, the accusation transpired into the world, to be repeated from echo to echo; and nobody invites Sophronius to dinner this season, on the plea of—"all the

world thinks him a bore : we will ask a more popular man." But for the plain-speaking of the clubs—in the mealy-mouthed days of Addison, for instance,—Sophronius would have gone to his grave with the reputation of being a very superior man, and the best talker of his day.

Lord Harry, too ;—but for the unholy inquisition of the clubs, *who* would have found out the Lord Harry? A century ago, he would have lived and died a man of wit and pleasure about town, telling the very best stories in the very best manner, secretly assassinating the reputations of his friends, with a degree of spirit and address worthy a Neapolitan brigand ; publicly tomahawking and scalping only such of his enemies as the world is at no pains to defend,—hitting those in the eye who had no friends, and kicking the man who was down without a chance of getting up again.

Till he was five-and-twenty, Lord Harry was pronounced to be the best fellow in the world ; and at thirty, had progressed into the reputation of the most agreeable. No dinner complete without Lord Harry and his *bon*

mots, no party to the moors perfect without his capital stories; and lucky was the park or castle which had secured him for its Christmas festivities or Easter fêtes. When a royal party was expected,—that severest calamity which can befall a country house,—the first thing done was to implore the early arrival of Lord Harry, undaunted by even the unamusement of royalty, and possessed of a fund of gossip not only inexhaustible, but adapted to ears polite, ears politer, and ears politest.

Just, however, as his lordship had attained the zenith of his fame as a wit and a charmer, White's was undergoing one of those spasmodic attacks which, once or twice in the course of its existence, have caused it to relax in rigidity. A succession of east winds one March, accompanied by a severe influenza, had carried off an unusual portion of its dowager dandies and delicate lordlings; and Lord Harry, instead of the five premonitory black-ballings he had anticipated from jealous compeers, got in without a struggle! About the same time Crockford founded his princely *Académie des Jeux*, and, from a mere

man about town, Lord Harry became suddenly established as a Club-man.

Three months afterwards, and he was a lost mutton! It was not Hazard through which he fell from his high estate. He became a martyr neither to whist, *écarté*, nor piquet. But no insolvent shifted by the Commissioners, no bankrupt cross-examined in Basinghall Street, endures a rougher system of browbeating than he who attempts to maintain the reputation of being supremely amusing among those whose business in life is to be supremely amused; and Lord Harry, when weighed in the balance, was found wanting.

Lord Harry was convicted of appropriating other men's stories,—of pilfering other men's jokes,—of fathering other men's puns,—of repeating other men's mystifications. The first time he attempted at White's one of those capital anecdotes which had been wont to set the dowager dinner-tables in a roar, he was assailed by twenty voices with "A Copley, a Copley!—Sir Joseph, Sir Joseph!"—the thing having originated in that very room, three seasons before. By degrees, as his

budget became unfolded, every article it contained was recognised as stolen goods, and appropriated to the rightful owner. The capital song was O'Callaghan's,—the epigram Luttrell's,—the hoax Sneyd's,—the *bon mot* Alvanley's;—not so much as the smallest joke of which he stood possessed, could he venture to call his own. The hitherto triumphant Lord Harry was accordingly denounced as an impostor by those among whom wit must be spontaneous, and the impromptu, if *fait à loisir, fait à point*; the Helicon of White's being licensed to be drunk on the premises.

But if some jays be plucked of their borrowed plumes on appearing among the proud peacocks of St. James's Street, a still severer fate attends those efflorescent talkers who would pass in society for habitual liars, unless protected by the Saxon cloth of gentlemen.

At all times, London possesses one or two pleasant fellows, privileged by their ten thousand a-year, or peerage, or seat in Parliament, whose inventive genius devotes itself to talking novels and romances, instead of writing them. For a certain number of

seasons they are voted "excellent fun." By degrees, approval deepens into wonder. People venture to appear surprised at such *very* extraordinary adventures having befallen, or come to the knowledge of a single individual; and the world begins to smile, though aside, and politely. Unable to convict, it dares not accuse.

But let such a man take up his parable in a fashionable club, and he will be called Lying So-and-so within a week!—The name will not banish him from society. As "Lying So-and-so," on the contrary, he will be oftener invited, and more complacently listened to, than when presuming to impose himself on society as matter-of-fact. But the world is on its guard. Nobody is obliged to believe. The verdict of the club has exercised the influence of an Old Bailey conviction; and to have one's pocket picked by a notorious Barrington is a greater disgrace to oneself, than to the perpetrator of the act.

It is amazing the evil influence that may be produced in a club by the persistency of an obnoxious member, — some recognised bore,—some obstinate batton-holder,—some

touchy fire-eater,—some man of slovenly or offensive habits,—who, having by oversight crept in, is there for the remainder of his days, neither useful nor ornamental, like the brazen statue in Hyde Park, which everybody wishes away, and no one is privileged to remove.

Snubbed at home, rebutted in society, such an individual becomes permanent in his club. The more popular members put their heads into the room, and make a hasty exit on beholding him. The very waiters loathe the sight of him, as fatal to their interests. Night after night, they find him clear the gallery. The club becomes thin, cheerless, deserted. Nothing but death can stand its friend; for an obnoxious member is sure to be as punctual in the payment of his subscription as though it were included in the Queen's taxes. And yet in an extreme case like this, homicide is not justifiable!—

Not that the fellowship of a club begets more acquaintance between parties, otherwise strangers, than if they met in the pit at the opera. On the contrary, a man is more on his guard against an individual

of whose acquaintance he is undesirous, whom he constantly meets at his club, than if further removed. Among foreigners, it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, for persons to sit year after year in the same room, perusing the same newspaper, dipping into the same snuff-box, and warming themselves by the same fire, yet preserving total alienation. But English phlegm is an unfailing amulet. Even as the sulphur of our seacoal fires is a preservative against the humidity of the climate, the reserve of our nature forms an antidote, or preventive check to the sociability of the clubs.

During the prevalence of the balloon mania, it was no uncommon thing for one or more of the ten individuals who chose to hazard life and limb for the pleasure of fluctuating a critical hour between time and eternity, to endure the novel sensations of the ascent and descent,—the risk,—the excitement,—the enjoyment,—without one syllable of intercommunication with their fellow aeronauts. There are Englishmen who have been known to suffer shipwreck, without any increase of familiarity with their

companions in peril. And, but for this impervious coat of mail, this buffalo-skinned habit of reserve, many fine gentlemen would be as shy of entering a club as a cholera hospital.

Some men identify themselves with their club, as though it constituted a second family. The country baronet puts down the name of his son at Boodle's the day he is breeched; and the London banker is as jealous of the credit of Arthur's, as of his own firm. The admittance of some flashy man of fashion goes as much against the grain with him, as to the colonel of an infantry regiment the arrival of a new ensign, with horses, grooms, and a French valet. The United Service, the Oriental, possess an *esprit de corps*, naturally arising from their specific nature; and the man who says, "Yes, I belong to the Cocoa Tree, and so did my father and grandfather before me," pronounces the words in a spirit of conservatism worthy the nobleman who adhered to his pigtail, and the nobleman who still adheres to his Hessian boots, fifty years after their abolition by the acclaim of the civilized community.

Others devote themselves to their club, as though it constituted one of the duties of life ;—and never does the legislative boss of John Bull,—the organ which causes him to enact statutes for the peeling of turnips, and render penal the ringing of dustmen's bells,—develop itself more strongly than in the fussiness of club committees. There are certain Tritons of the minnows who, having no establishments of their own to regulate, or being excluded from the regulation thereof by their own Xantippes, find their chief delight in bullying the house-steward, and examining the items of kitchen accounts,—organizing the cellars, or lecturing the fish-mongers of the club to which they officiate as ædiles.

Officious members of this description appear invaluable to those more indolent epicureans, thankful to anybody who will assist in greasing the creaking wheels of life, to render their own progress the easier. But the rising generation of the club,—the movement party,—the Young England of the community, in its seal-skin coats and Chesterfield wrappers,—is sure to regard them as a drag-

chain on the vehicle,—a nuisance to be put down by act of parliament.

To men of business, a club is a relaxation; to idle men, part of the business of life. The great unpaid of rural legislation, born, if squires, for the quorum, if yeomen, for churchwardens,—have in London life their prototypes in the monsterers of nothings of a club committee.

To others, the club is a whetstone for their wit. They frequent the Carlton or Reform to pick up political opinions, as pigeons peas. They go to the Athenæum for their sententiousness, to the Garrick for their jokes; and, if kept at home by indisposition, become as dull as a great man, or an actor imperfect in his part who cannot catch the prompter's word.

This accounts for the extraordinary variations in the quality of town or country conversation, in certain persons. The same individual, as stagnant in Hampshire as the lake in his own park, becomes lively and agreeable in Berkeley Square. In the country, he wants the spur of his club, and lacks the varnish requisite to bring out his colours.

It is there he cuts the birch, or gathers the bunch of nettles wherewith to stir up the vivacities of others. Among his brother squires, he is too apt to have his own way, —which is anything but the way of the world.

Next to freemasonry, there is no species of delusion through which the fair sex is so grievously imposed upon by the dark, as the great mystery of clubs. It is a word flung in the teeth of women by father, brother, husband, friend. The polytheism of the bad old times assigned to the weaker sex a variety of religious duties or pleasures, secure from male intrusion. Now-a-days, there is not a single temple, the threshold whereof is sacred against the foot of man. *He* may intrude at all times, in all places; yet has arrogated to himself a sanctuary secure as the thrice-hallowed solitude of sovereignty.

The most angry, the most jealous, the the most injured woman in the world, would not find courage to beard the lion in his den, and follow him with her reproaches or menaces up the majestic steps of White's, or storm the citadel of the United Service.

Imagine a wretched wife pursuing her truant husband into the play-room at Crockford's, or the muzz-room at the Athenæum!—After torturing her soul out at home, Sir John Brute defies retort or reproach, by taking up his hat, and driving down to his club. No redress—no retaliation!—He may remain there till the following day; leaving her ladyship to burst with rage at home, or sink under her mortifications.

Even in lesser particulars, the club man obtains undue advantage over his female acquaintances. Lælius, for instance, imposes himself upon the mediocracy of the Regent's Park as a man of wit and fashion: grieves with impotent familiarity for "poor Sydney Smith," quotes the aphorisms of Fonblanque, and talks of having "just left Bulwer." How are the Irish dowagers, and Mrs. Brown Greens, to surmise that all these pretences begin and end in belonging to the Athenæum?

In the same spirit, the half-pay colonel pushes his way at Cheltenham by having "familiar in his mouth as household words" the sacred names of those with whom he never stood between an Axminster carpet

and the ceiling, save in the United Service club ; secure, in fact, from detection of the cheat, by the very distinctness of position which must prevent them from coming into collision.

Be not, however, these casual strictures interpreted into any disrespect for an institution so essentially English as the club ; so essentially English, indeed, that, on whatever savage territory the Union Jack is planted, the first symptom of British colonization is to set up a depot of British compounds ;—the second, to build a church ;—and the third, to form a CLUB.

Clubs may be estimated as the fourth estate of the British Constitution : a moral exchange, for the traffic and barter of opinion ; and no man would be stupid enough to cry down clubs unless he had been black-balled at half-a-dozen.

Of those now flourishing in the metropolis which are free from the stamp exclusive or professional, if White's be the most select, Brookes's the most distinguished, and Crockford's the most brilliant, the Travellers' is the most amusing, because the most fluctuating.

Every season brings its novelties from Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Naples, Constantinople, Petersburg. Its *cuisine* is the most original, its habits are the most desultory. The cut-and-very-dry old gentleman of more stereotypic clubs would scarcely endure this. But it is decidedly the one that does least towards contracting the opinions and imparting the appearance of an automaton to the CLUB MAN.

THE DINING-OUT MAN.

A DIARY.

THANK heaven, the winter is over at last!—Country houses take too much out of a man, in return for what he extracts from them. —It is well enough in those where one has the ear of the house, as well as the run of the house,—remaining a fixture, while successive parties of guests appear and disappear. For the same *bon mots* and good stories serve to amuse his Grace on Friday, which were tried upon the country-neighbour party with success, the preceding Monday,—as inoculation was attempted upon criminals, before the royal family were submitted to the prick of the lancet. More particularly when the *whole* set has been renovated. It is a bore to have some single gentleman, or stationary

souffre douleur cousin, on the watch for the point of every well-worn anecdote,—like people at a pantomime, familiar beforehand with the tricks.

Still, even when one makes a hit, the wear and tear of the thing is prodigious. One goes through the work of three dinners per diem;—breakfast, luncheon, and dinner,—and all without refreshment! In town, one has the chance of the clubs and morning visits to brighten one. But in a country house, where one can only rub up per aid of the new works and periodicals lying on the table, or visits shared in common with the rest of the party, one *must* fall back on one's own resources.

This is the third Christmas I have spent at K—— Park; and, decidedly, I must provide for myself elsewhere, next winter. Lord K—— is such a bore, with his everlasting relations.—That eternal brother and sister-in-law, and the neighbours Sir John and Lady Wiseacre, seem as completely established there, as the family plate; and it is too much to expect a man to do the agreeable, year after year, to the same

people. I saw a smile exchanged between K—— and Lady Theresa, when I began my famous story about Perceval and Michael Angelo Taylor, as much as to say, "WHAT, AGAIN?"—And the Wiseacres, who are as rude as all the rest of the Shropshire squirearchy, told me in plain terms one morning at breakfast, on my attempting to hitch in poor Copley's capital pun about Vale Royal, that they had been circulating it all over the country ever since they heard it from my lips, five years ago!—

Rebuffs of that sort are like a blow with a pole-axe. Next Christmas, I will try Yorkshire. Yorkshire is unbroken ground. They are hospitable people, with a good hearty, wholesome laugh at one's service, and a strong capacity for being amused; and there is something exhilarating in a fresh audience.

I am sadly afraid, meanwhile, that K—— Park was a failure!—I did not do what was expected of me, or what I expect of myself. Several of the dinners were flat as the turbot; and the Duke yawned fifty-four times during the two short days he

was there. I saw Lord K—— look at me reproachfully, as much as to insinuate that it was *my* fault; and I have no doubt he said to Lady Theresa, “I would not have invited Prattles, if I had known how dull he was growing.” Whereas had not Lady Theresa and her husband been there, I should have done wonders. Wilmot K—— is the dullest fellow breathing; and Lady Theresa’s cold steadfast eye chills one like a nightmare!—

(*Mem. to book a good story of Lady Theresa’s English nursery-maid, who calls the “nightmare” the “coach-mare,”—having caught the word *cauchemar* from the French *bonne*.)*

To return to K—— Park.—It would be the deuce and all if a rumour should transpire that our party was *fiasco*. I had been foolish enough to circulate, far and near, that I was going. It carries a respectable air to be engaged, Christmas after Christmas, to the same country-house. Should those yawns of the Duke’s, therefore, get into circulation, the thing may cut me out of pleasant dinner-parties without end.

As I mean dicidedly to drop K—— Park next year, I have a great mind to take the initiative, and proclaim that the party was a lost case. It will be laid to the Kennedys, who were there for the first time. For last Christmas, nothing could be more brilliant than we were; and I was so universally admitted to have been the life and soul of the party, as to have been invited to all Lady Hunchback's dinners last season, solely on the strength of K—— Park.

Yes! The Kennedys shall answer for it. They are vulgar, pushing people, trying everything that false finery will do, to climb into good company. It won't do. There is nothing in either of them congenial with the listless *haut ton* of the great world. I heard Lady Theresa whisper to the Duke one evening, "I never saw one of Lord K——'s parties turn out so ill.—Too much quince in the apple-pie—too many monkeys in the menagerie!—One keeps fancying that all those whom these people were invited to entertain, had sent excuses. We have got the chorus; but the soprano and prima donna are absent without leave."

The Duke replied by one of his best-executed yawns!—And after *that*, K—— expected one to be agreeable!—

Well,—no matter! Parliament has met, and the dinners are beginning. No more country-house work till Easter, except for fox-hunters; and to amuse *them*, heaven be thanked, no one ever dreams of inviting conversation-men. The whipper-in suffices.

My first care at the commencement of the season, is to look over my list, preparatory to sowing cards for the dinner-crop, and a melancholy task it is!—Two or three of my best dowagers are pretty sure to have dropped in the interval, as is the case this very year. There is old Lady Fivecourse, in Berkeley Square, whose cook was really a meritorious artist,—a fellow who will one day rank with the Udes and Francatellis. I called at the door the other day, to inquire what was become of him; and find that one of the executors has bribed him off to Ireland! This is a public loss. Besides which, the man himself is lost. Genius of that description requires an enlightened audience. The Irish are scarcely up to more

than roast and boiled. It is throwing pearls before swine to give them such a man as Survilliers, who has glimpses of real inspiration.

I confess I had looked forward to many more pleasant dinner-parties at Lady Five-course's. There was no more occasion for that woman to die!—Though seventy-three she was strong as a seventy-four—(*mem. book that!*)—and might have lived to be a hundred. It was entirely her own doing. She *would* go dining out, when, with such a cook as Survilliers, it was her duty to dine at home. And then she called in a young apothecary, instead of adhering to Sir Thomas, who never does anything, so that *his* patients *have* some chance of getting through. I don't mean to be ill-natured; but if I were a man of sufficient consequence for my funeral to figure in the Morning Post, with a list of the mourners,—“third mourning coach, the medical attendant of the deceased Earl, John Pillbox, Esq.”—I would not employ a young apothecary, who knew that his connection in business might be established by such an advertisement.

Poor Lady Fivecourse,—what a capital set one used to meet at her house!—It was one of the places where I most enjoyed myself. Nothing but quiet, humdrum, mediocre people, who understood nothing but eating, and for whom one's oldest stories had the charm of novelty.

I remember at a dinner in Berkeley Square, last April, setting the table in a roar with an anecdote, which originally set me up as a dining-out man, in the time of George the Fourth! It was a story of Jekyll's; but he never did it justice, his imitation of the brogue being wretched. It improved in my hands. There are some stories, like some wines, which grow mellow with travelling. I never told it better than that day at Lady Fivecourse's, for I was taking pains. Lord Grangehurst was there; and I was wild to get an invitation to his new house, with the style and splendour of which the newspapers had been boring one for the last year. The spec. prospered. I dined with him three times after Easter, and was asked to Grangehurst for the *battue*. But on the whole, I was not

satisfied. His cellar is not what it ought to be. No man ought to pretend to Hock who is not certain that his grandfather saw it in bottle.

What a sorry life should I have led of it, but for the lucky chance which gave me a cast in the Marquis of Woodbury's post-chaise, on our transit from Oxford, on quitting college!—Both were in high spirits, bursting forth like a fresh-opened bottle of champagne; and my companion fortunately mistook spirits for wit. The mistakes of a young nobleman in the enjoyment of thirty thousand a-year are sure to find imitators. The women who wanted Woodsbury, whether for themselves or their daughters, protested that I was a charming companion; and after Woodsbury married, they did not think it decent to swallow their words, as they had swallowed mine.

During the season of his bachelorhood I was invited everywhere. It disarmed suspicion,—that is, the pretty creatures fancied it disarmed suspicion—to say, “Mr. Prattles, are you disengaged on Friday?—We shall be delighted to see you at half-past seven. Lord

Woodsbury, will you do me the favour to meet Mr. Prattles?"—though if, after my acceptance, it turned out that Woodsbury had a prior engagement, they took care to make my venison, mutton, and my claret, *ordinaire*. They were practising on my inexperience, — and I, upon their cunning. But it was at the expense of these manœuvres I learnt almost all I know of the ways of the world.

I was such a boy, that they talked freely before me; making it tolerably clear, that, according to the code of fashionable hospitality, nobody must expect to be entertained, who cannot entertain in their turn, either by their invitations, or their power of shedding grace upon the invitations of others.

This was a cruel lesson. Bachelor Chambers, I knew, were to be my destiny. I was as likely to have a mitre to give away, as a dinner. I had no alternative, therefore, but to abjure the lordly haunch and luscious pine, and stick to loins of mutton carved hunchwise, and meally apples by way of dessert,—or study to become amusing. Any

person of tolerable abilities may become anything he chooses, perforce of earnestness of purpose,—a stay-maker, or a Chancellor, or an opera-dancer, or a conjuror, or a quarterly reviewer,—no matter what! It is only the enervation of indolence that causes one to lag in the van. Before the Woodsbury spec. was over, I had run over my part, and was almost perfect. I watched the conversation-men of the day. I studied their very studied mode of being unstudied in their wit.—I discerned the most natural mode of lugging in impromptus made at leisure. Mademoiselle Mars at sixty-five enacts the part of the *ingénue*, or simple young girl, better than all the little misses of sixteen on the Parisian stage. So the skilful professional wit throws out bait for his own puns, as Anthony sent divers into the river to attach fishes to his hook, when angling in presence of Cleopatra.

There were giants on the earth in those days. There were some capital dining-out men on the pavé. From punning Caleb Whiteford to racy Joseph Jekyll,—from polished William Spencer to unrivalled

Sharpe,—from Colman to Canning,—from Luttrell to Alvanley,—from Copley to Ward,—there was talking going on in London every day, between six and nine, which it did one's heart harm to hear; so envious did it make one of their colloquial tactics.

To attain high eminence as a diner-out, something more is required than the mere power of conducing to the amusement of the company. A very entertaining fellow, who is nothing *but* an entertaining fellow, and known to be in want of a dinner, may be asked once or twice, by way of lion, but is never tolerated as a regular dinner guest in our best houses.

In the first place, the diner-out must eat like an epicure, and not like a glutton. A hungry man is not sufficiently at ease in his body, to be at ease in his mind. To be able to dispose of his own faculties, he must be in circumstances to appreciate the merits of the *entrée* he is tasting, while the party is tasting his *bon mots*,—but not to be *engrossed* by their excellence. His responsibility to his host must preponderate over the exquisiteness of his palate. People do

not like to throw away a first-rate *menu* upon a man who does not know *quenelles de veau* from sweetbreads, any more than on a fellow who sends his plate half a dozen times to the joint on the side-table.

On this head, I had nothing to fear. I possessed what is called "a genteel independence." I was certain of my roast and boiled, fish and soup, at my own expense, all the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. But what a prospect! Roast and boiled from the 1st of January to the 31st of December, when so many stew-pans were simmering in the aristocratic kitchens of Great Britain! Conscious that I had done nothing to deserve such a sentence at the hand of destiny, and feeling predestined to the *salmi* and the *capilotade*, by dint of following up my vocation, I can safely say, that for the last six seasons, not a man in this gastronomical metropolis has enjoyed a more universal acquaintance with the sauce-boats of the great world.

A vulgar-minded man, incapable of seizing the lights and shadows of social life, thinks it enough to push on straight to the

mark ; and, with a predetermination to be entertaining, begins to open his budget before the soup is off the table. Whereas there is scarcely more art required in dressing the dinner, than in addressing those who are invited to eat it.

There are certain appointed epochs of a dinner, differing in different sets and countries, appointed for the specific introduction of certain wines,—as sherry or madeira after soup, or hock between the courses. So also there are especial moments for the introduction of divers orders of anecdotes. The man who attempts a bit of scandal while the patés or cutlets are going their rounds, will find his risk rewarded by reproof and silence. People look as if they did not understand a word he was saying ; whereas if he wait till after the second round of champagne, he will set the table in a roar. Even the first will so far thaw the faculties or decorum of the party, that a significant smile may possibly repay his pains.

Soup admits of nothing of more stirring interest than the weather. People are not yet at their ease. They have not recovered

the fuss of taking their places. They have not got accustomed to their neighbours, or to the brightness of the dinner-room. They look blinky and perplexed. The edge of appetite, too, must be appeased. A few mouthfuls of hot, clear, spring soup, or *bisque d'ecrevisses*, cheers up the spirits, and disposes to sociability. A sip of sherry perfects the charm.

By the time turbot and its lobster sauce, or Severn salmon and its cucumber, figure on your plate, you may venture upon politics and the news of the day. If a clever man be near you, and you have important intelligence *in petto*, inquire of him whether he have anything new; then, with easy negligence, let fall the startling news that is to fix every eye at table upon yourself. Choose that moment to take wine, or to whisper confidentially to the servant behind your chair a request for a second investigation of the fish-sauces. You should appear to be anxiously interested in the coaxing of your own appetite, when you announce the abdication of the Emperor of China, or that her Majesty's favourite parrot

is sitting. All this, as stage effect, tends powerfully to the success of the piece.

Anything superlative in the way of wit should be reserved, like the hock, for the *finale* of the first course. Even in the best regulated household, there occurs a momentary pause most propitious to the explosion of a *bon mot*. The host is grateful to you ; the *maitre d'hôtel* is grateful to you ; everybody is grateful to you. A minute later, and the bustle of placing the second course on the table would be fatal to the success of your attempt.

That most disagreeable interruption at an end, the real business of dinner conversation begins. The tide is setting in. Till the rubicon of the second course be passed, your careful talker feels that all is preamble. It is not worth while to hazard anything of real excellence. It is waste of powder and shot to lavish pearls before the rapacious animals who think more of what reaches them through their lips, than through their ears.

But after the pheasant, green-goose, or turkey poult,—after the *fondue*, cabinet-pudding, and *Chambertin*, comes the tug of war !

Not only are the ears of the party opened, but its hearts. People are ready to laugh at anything; yet not too merry to distinguish between wit and humour,—an old story and a new anecdote.—With the orange jelly, you may whisper to a fair neighbour; with the *méringues glacés*, you may acquaint a dark one with some fact of foreign policy or fine-art fiddle-faddle, of which he was wholly ignorant. He will not turn sulky at finding you better informed than himself.

During a diner-out's first season or so, he takes almost as much pleasure in all that he causes others to swallow, as in all that he is swallowing. He enjoys his own stories, and his own success. But after making himself a name, after being cited here, there, and everywhere as the agreeable Mr. Prattles,—the new Sheridan,—the future Macaulay, he begins to grow nervous. He feels it necessary to talk up to his reputation; and a duty is always irksome. One dull dinner would undo him! A party where the sound of knives and forks is audible from pauses in the conversation, reflects eternal disgrace on its component parts; should it come to be

known that a regular diner-out was one of the offenders, he is a lost mutton,—that is, a lost buck.

He accordingly begins to cram, as if reading for a degree,—saps scandal,—and works up his small talk as for the Seatonian prize.

When first a man confronts the publicity of society, he is unable to distinguish its shades and gradations. Like a child contemplating the starry firmament, he beholds millions of stars, and rates them alike, incapable of distinguishing their gradations of magnitude. To make oneself agreeable at the dinner-table in certain circles, it suffices to read all the periodicals as they appear; to skim the daily papers, and be able familiarly to quote the jokes of the last number of the Quarterly Review. In others, it is necessary to have *written* one of the showy flare-ups, to obtain the ear of the company; and to hazard any direct allusion to them, above all to cite their witticisms, or any other good thing that has appeared in print, would be destruction. In such a party, a stale joke would

be thought as offensive as a stale John Dory. The stories narrated must have their bloom upon them, like the grapes; and every anecdote boast its virgin bouquet, like every bottle of claret. Even a moderately witty thing, wholly new and inedited, obtains a higher value than the best *mot* of Alvanley, filtered through the clubs.

“As somebody was saying yesterday at White’s,” observed a man at the capital table of the late Lord S——, and was about to relate some thrice-told tale, when Lord —— interrupted him with, “If I wanted to know what any one said at White’s, I would go there and hear it. I prefer something which you both think and say yourself, or, at all events, something new and original.”

Such a rebuff is too disagreeable to be wantonly provoked. For the same reason, nothing so stupid as to cram from such books as Walpole’s Letters, or Selwyn’s Memoirs, or any other, not old enough to be forgotten. News should be of Charles the Second’s time or Queen Victoria’s; and

nothing in the way of crib can be safely hazarded later than the times of George the First.

Time was, that ten pounds' worth of French, from the usher of some preparatory school, was worth a whole season's entertainments ; and in the early part of the present century, more than one diner-out traded exclusively upon popular books of French memoirs, still unfamiliar to the jog-trot London world. They fished their gastronomy out of Grimod de la Reynière and Brillat Savarin ; their wit out of Grimm, Diderot and Mesdames du Deffant and D'Epinay ; their philosophy from L'Hermite de la Chaussée D'Antin, and their sentiment from Madame de Souza.

Even our comedies were then " taken from the French," without fear of reprisal. But now that every lawyer's clerk visits Paris at least once a-year, and that the Burlington Arcade and its libraries supply wit and information at three-and-sixpence per month, to all classes of the community, a man attempting to dine out upon the *Revue de Paris*, *Revue des deux Mondes*,

La Mode, and La Presse, would be coughed down. It is only some solemn review that dares put on its considering cap, and inflict these stale scraps upon the public. For my part, having a reputation to sustain, I would not venture on anything, even wet from the press of Dumont or Lavocat. Several of the young members have over early sheets to brighten their speeches.

I had once a severe lesson on that score. Everybody knows the story of Conversation B. strolling to the toilet-table of Conversation S. one afternoon, where his card of mems. for the night was laid out with his pumps and white waistcoat; conning by rote the topics to be dragged in, and preceding him in the various opera-boxes to which they were assigned; so that every time the professed wit opened his lips, it was to recount some anecdote or *bon mot* which had been recited, ten minutes before, by his rival.

Exactly such was my disaster!—I had received one morning a batch of pamphlets from Paris; and as usual, extracted the pith for my private use. The gems thus

strung together, I intended to powder over my conversation that day at one of Lady Cork's choice dinner-parties; and had consequently provided myself with nothing else. On entering her famous old china-gallery, on the divans and slender porcupine-chairs of which I found scattered the best and brightest of the season, all was prepared, "the judges were met, a terrible show."

Unluckily I came late, having been detained running my eye over my notes; so that when I made my *entrée*, that pushing fellow L. had already the ear of the company. Judge of my horror when I found him giving tongue to one of my most striking novelties!—I longed to fly at him, and snatch it from his mouth,—as a sharp terrier, when another dog has pilfered a bone from him.—But it was all in vain!—He had got the first move.

Bon mot after *bon mot* did he let fly from his pigeon-trap, and every shot told. I had nothing left. The fellow subscribed to the same library as myself,—had obtained a view of the books four-and-twenty

hours before me, — and reduced me to bankruptcy! —

Cut up as I was, not even an incipient influenza which I pleaded, sufficed as my excuse with the old lady; and though I had the precaution to keep my chambers for a week to give colouring to the pretext, she never invited me again the whole season, except to one of those horrible *olla podridas* which she sometimes gave at the end of her dinner-weeks, to dispose of the fragments and drink the bottlings-up of wine. It may be supposed that I did not allow myself to be converted into quicklime.

Ill-natured people fancy that the life of a dining-out man is a life of corn, wine, and oil; that all he has to do is to eat, drink, and be merry. I only know that, had I been aware in the onset of life of all I should have to go through in my vocation, I would have chosen some easier calling. I would have studied law, physic, or divinity. I would have contented myself with the circuit; I would have even gone the whole hog, and become a par-

son, rather than enjoyed the Barmecides' feast of a diner-out. Eat and drink he may, but to be really merry I defy him—Viands and generous wines pass through his lips, without making the least impression on his palate. His attention is pre-engrossed. By venturing to dwell upon some dainty-dish, he is sure to lose the opportunity of introducing some striking remark, or hazarding some neat little pun. His appetite is continually on thorns. His slice of venison is, perhaps, brought him just as he has launched into some capital story; and he has only the alternative of spoiling it, or finding the fat of opaline opacity when able to pay himself proper attention. Now venison, like time and tide, waits for no man; and the stupidest ass of a country cousin may swallow it when the said fat is clear as amber, while the diner-out finds it gradually freezing upon his hapless plate!—

In the same way, one's iced pudding begins to melt while one finishes a series of *reparties* with some sharp opposite neighbour. I remember last season having an

avalanche before me, that would have cooled the fire-king only to look at; and before I could command the use of my lips, the highway at Brentford was not more fluent than my plate!—

It is the custom, by the way, of quadrille dancers to be very scrupulous in engaging a *vis-à-vis*. Young ladies pretend that it is of as much consequence to them to be mated with an eligible opposite neighbour, as with an eligible partner. It is of fifty times more importance to a dining-out man!—What he says to his two next neighbours, however interesting, does him little or no credit with the party. But a confederate opposite, is as invaluable an adjunct as the clown attending the horsemanship at Astley's. The whole audience is convulsed by the witticisms addressed to *him*. The table is in a roar when I happen to sit facing Smythe or Dizzy. In such a partnership, one loses nothing by a division of profits.

On the other hand, it is a horrible trial of patience to bowl to an awkward bat; or throw the ball which there is no one to

catch. Nothing more bewildering than for a man who knows himself to have been invited for the entertainment of the company, to get placed, through one of those blunders which so often occur in mixed dinner-parties, next to some dunny dowager—dunny in mind as well as body; or opposite to a bevy of misses in muslin frocks, to whom it is not permissible to plead guilty of an idea. Conversation is out of the question. It is like singing with your face to a stone-wall. Every fresh attempt at liveliness is rewarded with a stare of stupid wonder; and it is only when you make yourself comprehensible to the meanest capacity by abusing the weather, or canting about the state of the times, that you are rewarded with more than monosyllables in reply. In vain do you chafe and fret. You have, perhaps, half-a-dozen capital stories fermenting in your brains. Take my advice. Postpone your triumph. Endure your total eclipse in solemn silence. It is useless attempting to make bricks without straw.

One of my best houses is the Marquis of Bexfield's. What a *chef*,—what a *maitre*

d'hôtel, — what an establishment, — what a master thereof! Such a pleasant set, too; — fine people, who are not too fine, and coarse people, who are not too coarse. From the moment of crossing the threshold, one is conscious of a certain *bien-être* pervading one's animal nature; as in a warm-bath, or the sortie from a long sermon at Christmas, or in the dog-days. There are certain capital dining-houses, such as that of the late Lord S. where gastronomy is made of too engrossing importance. One eats too critically, and grows nervous lest one should be betrayed into enjoying something which the knowing ones decide to be of moderate quality. In such a set, the conversation-man is of secondary importance. People are invited exclusively to eat and drink. The talker is there only to fill up the pauses between the numerous courses. At Lord Bexfield's, this is not the case. One stands one's ground with the *bastions de volaille* and *Château Margour*.

The only fault I have to find with his lordship's arrangements, is the multitude of plums in his pudding. He has too many

of us. The other day I dined there, expecting to meet the Guernseys, the Middlesexes, and others of that class, with whom I had noticed in the Morning Post, Lord Bexfield to have been lately dining. Not a bit! Nothing but authors and diners-out, with their females!—I never met a stupider set of people. They all looked affronted at being asked to meet each other; and every time the door opened, I saw them looking out anxiously for some lordly or ladyly arrival. We were there to enjoy each other's society, to entertain each other; when every soul of us knew that not one of the party was a dinner-giver, and consequently deserving the attention of the rest. The utmost which any of them pretended to, was what is anomalously called a good plain cook!—("Oh! oh!")

I wonder whether the Mæcenases of Astley's Amphitheatre or Sadler's Wells would do so stupid a thing as collect their tumblers to entertain each other with feats of agility? *i. e.* to betray the mysteries of their calling, and allow a rival to discover how the fire was eaten, and how the eggs were balanced?

—For my part I was once idiot enough to let fall one of my choice stories, one of my “gems for the season,” before Punham, who most nefariously made it his own; and, as he goes among a set of people ignorant enough of the etiquettes of society to feel entitled to seize on all they hear, and appropriate waifs and strays, like Cornish wreckers, I had the agony of hearing one of my best compilations torn to pieces wherever I went,—served piecemeal,—and martyred by clumsy dealing in the operation. Punham used to sit by, listening with an untortured countenance; and, like the distracted mother, brought to light by King Solomon’s division of the living babe in her presence, any one of common discretion might have recognised me, by my anguish, to be the legitimate parent of the hantling.

By the way, Punham has one terrible advantage over me. His seat in the house places him in the current of a thousand rumours, which I only receive by a side-wind. Punham knows on Monday, the scandal I am glad to repeat on Tuesday. I have been

sometimes ready to expire when, after firing great guns to draw the attention of the table to some little bit of news I had picked up in the afternoon at the Athenæum, or some visit, my narration has been met with, "Yes; I fancy it is true. Punham mentioned it at Riddlesworth's yesterday at dinner."

Parliament, too, keeps him out of the routine of nauseous humdrum — dowager-visits, to which I am harnessed. I have heard old Lady Clairville say to *him*, "Oh! I always make excuses for *you*. I know how much you are taken up at the house;" and while I wear my wits to the stump in fetching and carrying tittle-tattle for her, she invites Punham to all her pleasantest dinners, — *he* who never does more than leave a card at her door! — I have half a mind to renounce her set altogether; for I look upon Punham as a sort of extinguisher chained to my flambeau.

Would I could hope that her set would regret me, as I deserve to be regretted. But they pretend to call me a tale-bearer. One day, when I was sitting there, that

saucy fellow, Sir Henry ——, began talking about the legislative wisdom of putting to death all stray animals in the time of the Plague, protesting that more mischief was conveyed from house to house by idle in-and-out puppies, than by responsible, persons. I knew what he meant. I was almost inclined to call him out. But I was to dine the next day with the Marquis, and did not want to injure my digestion.

Those dinners at the Marquis's are my sheet-anchor!—I dine at twenty other places, on the strength of them. It is not alone the excellence of my friend Casserole, or the splendid liberality with which the whole thing is conducted; but, next day,—nay, for three days afterwards,—one is able to drop in at a hundred different houses, letting fall incidentally something one heard or saw there as an excuse for a careless allusion to the dinner.

Then comes the inevitable inquiry, “Did you dine there yesterday?”—“Yesterday, or Wednesday was it? Yes, yesterday.”—“And who had you?”—“Not a very large party—the Duke of Wellington (or whoever may

be the lion of the day,) and a few others of one's own set."

I hardly ever knew the bait fail of a nibble. Slow people are fond of being able to say to the next equally humdrum morning visitor,—“Prattles has just been here. He heard yesterday at Lord So-and-so's”—— and next day one gets an invitation. The Marquis's dinner kittens half a hundred other dinners.

I must own, however, that I had fewer on my list last season, than any preceding one. Did this arise from a diminution in the aggregate of dinners given, or of my own popularity?—The latter, I fear!—People get fanciful in the matter of their conversation men. Though certain dishes must recur and recur again in their *menu* every spring,—salmon, turbot, lamb, or turkey-poult,—they seem to think it necessary to have a change of talkers. There is always some new man,—somebody that has taken an honour,—or returned from the North Pole or Timbuctoo,—or written a book that has been exalted in the Edinburgh or cut to mince-meat in the Quarterly,—or blown up a fort

in Scind,—or created five hundred miles of railroad—or inherited half a million a year,—or run away with somebody's daughter, or *from* somebody's wife,—or something wonderful or other, that entitles him to the veneration and dinners of an indulgent public.

With such a card in hand, our friends grow ungrateful,—forget how many a stupid party of theirs one's efforts have redeemed from the yawns;—and invite one to a family dinner! I must do as poor Lady Cork used, when her popularity was flagging; *viz.* send an account to the newspapers of my own death, and next day the contradiction. Something to this effect:—

“We learn, with the liveliest regret, the death of that amiable man, and charming companion, ALFRED PRATTLES, Esq. Few persons could be so ill-spared from the symposia of social life! Mr. Prattles has been for many years past recognized as one of the most distinguished members of the literary and fashionable world; and no party was considered perfect without the addition of his brilliant and highly piquant conversation. He was, perhaps, on the

whole, the liveliest talker of the day.”—
Evening Paper.

Followed by “It is with the most unfeigned satisfaction we learn that there is not the slightest foundation for the rumour of the premature decease of that highly-popular individual, Mr. Prattles. We had ourselves the satisfaction of seeing him yesterday, in St. James’s Street, walking arm-in-arm with the Duke of Wellington; nor can we sufficiently despise the callous and wanton levity with which certain persons for the furtherance of private pique, presume to harrow up the feelings of anxious friends by the circulation of reports of this cruel nature. We cannot sufficiently apologize to our subscribers for our insertion of so ill-advised a fabrication.”

I foresee from hence the compunctious visitings brightening up the damped affections of my friends and acquaintance, on perusing such an announcement.

“Poor Prattles!” they will exclaim, “I don’t know how it was,—I had not seen so much of him lately,—yet he is one whose

company is always an acquisition,—an amusing little fellow,—a man who knows everything,—a man whom everybody knows.—By Jove! I'll call on him to-morrow and ask him to dinner.

Even those less-affectionately disposed towards me, even those who perhaps think me a bore, will be moved to ejaculate, "Poor little Prattles!—After all there was more twaddling than mischief in his gossip. His tittle-tattle was only the labour of his vocation. He never did any harm,—that is, he never meant to do any harm.—If he sometimes administered arsenic instead of magnesia, it was only through a mistake of the labels. He never poisoned people with malice prepense. And he was really very good fun in rainy weather in the country,—or when trying to sit his horse in the Park with his umbrella under his arm.—We could better spare a better man."

And then one's works!—The moment a literary man dies, and the newspapers take to getting up his memoirs, every little anonymous thing of merit that has been floating about for the last ten years,

is laid to his charge. The real author has always the power of establishing his right to his unclaimed dividends.—A letter to the editor from the “constant reader of his invaluable journal,” informing him in roundabout phrase that his facts are fictions, and his fictions rubbish, only serves to increase the interest of the paper. On the strength of my decease, I shall probably be charged with the authorship of “Violet,” or “The Vestiges of Creation.” I have a great mind to charge myself with “Fashionable Friends,” or “The Nun of Arrouca,” or “The new Timon.” It might produce a newspaper controversy, certain to bring all parties into notice. What neat little articles in the Examiner, Spectator, Athenæum, Atlas, and Literary Gazette, will endeavour to fix the cap upon the rightful head!—What a bother in the magazines, — what solemn sneers in the Quarterlies. — I foresee a vista of dinners prolonged from the Easter feast to the July banquets of Lovegroves (when the white-bait, like hobbledahoys, have outgrown their melted butter,) issuing from this lucky suggestion.

How I hate all those weekly papers,—with their “Library Tales,” and “Weekly Gossip,” and “Foreign Correspondence,” taking the very roll out of one’s mouth!—The digestive doctors swear that the human constitution has never got on half so well since the elaborate process of modern gastronomy in the form of soups, gravies, and jellies, took half its labours out of its hands: protesting that the gastric functions, not having enough to do, prey upon themselves, and consequently do mischief. The processes of the human mind are vastly analogous to those of the human stomach. When people used to work hard in the pursuit of knowledge, a healthy appetite was engendered; and it is only since the hashes of literature came to be constantly served at our tables,—scraps of poetry, romance, or history, enhanced by the peppery sauce of the reviewers,—that we have lost all taste for the wholesome learning, the solid sirloin of the historian, and the homely batter-pudding of Mrs. Trimmer and Mrs. Chapone.

.Above all, the impertinent celerity with which these placarders of literature send flying

all abroad news of the birth of every *chef-d'œuvre*, and the suicides of rash authorship, is enough to distract one.—Five-and-twenty years ago, people took a couple of months to decide whether it were worth while to send to Hookham's for the new novel; and six weeks after the publication of Southey's last epic, used to be asking each other whether that strange man, who wrote *Es-priella's Letters*, had not been attempting something new?—Now, the review of a new work in the *Quarterly* is announced simultaneously with the new work; and the march of intellect makes its way into every hole and corner, in more than double-quick time.

My little trips of discovery to Paris, for the importation of "novelties of the season," are now of no more use than if I marched up Highgate Hill and down again. Nothing nearer than Constantinople is in the slightest degree available. Between steam-navigation and yachting, the Mediterranean is grown as vulgar as the Nore. Could the ghost of Captain Cook arise to inquire why it has never been laid in West-

minster Abbey, how astonished would it be to find people steaming over the Red Sea, as easily as they used to row, in his time, over Chelsea Reach; and the name of Polynesia as familiar in their mouths as that of Polly Peachum!—I am thinking of a tour for next autumn (if the untimely-decease scheme do not fructify), and cannot for the soul of me hit upon anything sufficiently exclusive to give a fillip to public curiosity, or pretend to be written up by the Quarterly.

The only spot of earth concerning which St. James's Street and Belgrave Square know nothing, is the City of London. I have a vast mind to try, "TRAVELS TO THE EAST; WITH SKETCHES OF SMITHFIELD AND THE BARBICAN; by one of the Operative class." One might furbish up famous antiquarianisms out of the Gentleman's Magazine, about Crosby Hall and Winchester House,—and bring in a host of savoury little compliments to the various companies, and different aldermen, certain to bring down coveys of dinners!—I smell turtle and venison in the very promise!—The Albion

—Bleaden—Birch, are indeed august names !
— Cornhill, promiseth corn in Egypt ;—
Smithfield, marrow and fatness ;—Warwick
Lane, manna. — The city must necessarily
abound in byres and cellars,—fat beeves,
and strong beer. Fish ought never to be
eaten westward of Temple Bar ; and albeit,
the Bank and Stock-Exchange make their
turtle soup, like their twenty per cent., out
of calves' heads, there are capital little *fricots*
tossed up in the Poultry.—Yes,—decidedly,
if a supposititious demise do not mend my
fare, I will try the Eastern circuit.

The town is wretchedly in want of a
startle. Society is miserably drowsy. The
great deficiency of the English mind is in-
vention. The country is full of originals ;
yet collectively, we are the most jog-trot
nation in Europe. But does it become me
to point out a defect, but for which, there
would be an end to the vocation of the *Pique*
assiette, or DINING-OUT MAN ?

THE MUTE.

DEATH hath its vānities, and Mutes are of them !—Which of us has not been startled, on some bright midsummer morning, when the sunshine streams as with a vengeance on the glowing pavement, or on one of those still more gorgeous days of autumn, that seem purposed to shed their rays on dahlias, sunflowers, hollyhocks, and other gauds,—by the contrast of two masses of gloom, stationed in stedfast sadness on either side the entrance of some human habitation ; types of the sorrow that weepeth within ; or, it may be, indications to the hearse and mourning coaches at what door they are to stop, in order to receive as a senseless burden what was wont to step forth, animate and

cheerful into the sunshine, over that accustomed threshold?—

These sable statues are the Mutes of a funeral ceremony!—Habited from top to toe in suits of sables, their faces composed to decent sympathy with the lugubrious ceremonial of the day, they assume their post shortly after daylight, in order to preserve tranquillity around the house of mourning; an aim accomplished by hanging out a banner of woe, which never fails to collect upon the pavement before the door all the errand boys and idle apprentices of the neighbourhood; the young children to gaze with wondering eyes upon those mysterious symbols of death; the elder ones to gossip over the name and nature, demise and sepulture, of the defunct,—of what doctors he died,—to what heirs his lands and tenements are to descend.

The milkwoman stands, open-mouthed, to listen; while into the basket of the transfixed greengrocer's boy (whose eyes are fascinated by those living signposts of the dwelling whose wine-cup is a chalice of tears) dive the cunning fingers of a ragged

urchin, to whom green codlings are as forbidden fruit; whereon a squabble ensues between the juvenile delinquent and careless errand-boy. Some of the bystanders take part with the victim, some with the thief. Like the debates of a higher place, argument degenerates into vociferation. All threaten, all bawl, all bellow.—The tumult demands the interference of a policeman. And all this uproar, because the vain-gloriousness of human nature requires that a door whence the dead are about to be borne forth to decay, should be pointed out to vulgar notice by the attendance of those twins of Erebus, a couple of undertaker's Mutes!—

Yet, how wondrous the genius of these professionals! Throughout the street-brawl that grew, shouted, and subsided, before their eyes, not a token of human frailty in their steadfast countenances!—They took no part with either the Capulets or Montagues of the mob; the *Neri*, or chimney-sweeps, the *Bianchi*, or bakers' boys. They looked on unmoved, like marble effigies upon a tomb. Their eyes so much as blinked not;

their very noses refrained from contemptuous commentation: they kept silence, even from good words:—for *they were Mutes!*—

Let it not be inferred, however, that Mutes are an inevitable fringe upon the sable garment of death. On the continent of Europe, their office is performed by proxy. On the day of burial, funereal draperies (black or white, as the sex and age of the defunct may be) are suspended, at early morn, across the ground floor of the house of death; which, being level with the causeway, and undivided from it by an area, is easily attainable. This drapery is of serge or velvet, plain or garnished with silver, according to the means of the family. For the noble, it is furthermore adorned with heraldic escutcheons; by the opulent, it is overscattered with silver tears and palms of triumph.

For though “dust to dust” be the universal sentence of mortality, there is dust *and* dust!—There is the dust of Rothschilds, and the dust of paupers. There was the dust of Dryden, which was bandied about for burial between the poverty of his family and the

brutal jests of an insolent lordling; there was the dust of Frauenlob, the Minnesinger, borne forth by the fairest damsels, clad in white, chanting his own sweet songs to the place of interment. There was the dust of Sheridan, snatched from the hands of the bailiff to be escorted to the immortality of the Abbey, by dukes and earls, eager to catch the reflection of the last gleam of his renown: and there is the dust of those whose coffins are made the rallying point of the seditious, who shake their clenched fists at government and spit their venom at the throne, under sanction of a hat-band and weepers.

But there is also the dust of the poor and nameless:—people, whose career on earth has been one of duty and submission;—people, over whose casual coffin the hearts that loved them have not leisure to break, lest those should starve who depend upon their labours for daily bread. These must be thrust into the grave in haste. These leave no memory to the multitude. In foreign lands, they boast no drapery from the *pompes funébres* above their doorway; at

home, no nodding plumes. No ragged throng gathers before their threshold to see the coffin, covered with a parish pall, paraded beneath the "lidless eye of heaven." The holiness of solitude is there, even amid the crowded city. Nature herself hath stationed beside their door, the unseen Mute.

It is often said that a man must be born an artist. Surely a Mute also must be a Mute by imprescriptible right? There is no accounting for tastes—there is no accounting for trades. To be a butcher, a dentist, a surgeon, a scavenger, may be "the gift of fortune;" but, to be a Mute at a funeral, must "come by nature."

What but the decree of Providence can create that rigid immobility of feature—that leadenness of eye—that stoniness of brow—that more than military uprightness of deportment; not altogether like the African, "God's image cut in ebony," but an abstraction of sable woe, scarcely vivified by the touch of life. A mummy has more animation in it than the accomplished Mute in the discharge of his duties; and when stationed beside some aristocratic doorway in

St. James's Square (to bespeak reverence for the ennobled clay, covered with crimson velvet glittering with cherubim of gold), the black marble figure of a knight templar, upon his tomb in some mildewed cathedral, is not more rigidly unexistent than the well-drilled Mute.

Accident, however, sometimes creates the singular individual which one might suppose a forethought of Providence.

In a cheerful, sunshiny cottage, on the Severn side, there once rolled upon the floor a chubby child, whose skin was glossy with healthfulness, whose eyes were bright with joy; whose voice was a carol, whose cheek red as the apples clustering in the tree that spread its knotty, shapeless branches beside the little homestead.

Jem Willett was a pledge of joy to his parents,—for he was a first-born; a ray of the sun of promise, which, in the early days of matrimony, beams alike for rich and poor; and he was dandled by his father, and hugged by his mother, till a little Jack came to claim a share in the family endearments.

Still, Jem was the favourite. He was the first. He was such a merry, lightsome-hearted, little fellow. Nor was it till a whole tribe of Toms and Neds, Bets and Sals, put forth equal rights with himself to slices of the brown loaf, that poor Jem's humble garments were suffered to go ragged, and he was allowed to crawl to bed with the rest, unblest by the caresses of a parent. For what leisure had father or mother for domestic love?—Their bread was embittered by its scantiness.—The staff of life was a slender staff in their hands.—Taxed to support the waste and wantonness of the great castle whose towers were visible from their cottage door, the loaf, which was their luxury, scarcely sufficed their wants: and how could they be expected to love the children whose cries of hunger distracted their poor hovel?—The caress became a cuff; the tender word, a curse.—The children were sent out to work.—It was something that they were not sent out to beg!—

Yet, in spite of these clinging cares, there was an inborn joyousness in poor Jem Willett's nature, that would not be repressed.

He seemed to whoop and halloo the louder for his rags; and even want sat so lightly on him, "that his cheek so much as paled not." A better fortune seemed reserved for him, than for his brother and sister starvelings. While one or two were draughted into a factory-team of drag-children, while Jack became a cow-boy, Bill a climbing-boy, and Tom the drudge of a collier's barge, Jem (who was growing up what the linen-drappers' advertisements call "a genteel youth") was apprenticed to a carpenter: apprenticed by the benevolence of the parish, which was now sole proprietor of Richard Willett's lame widow and fifteen children, the husband and father having fallen a victim to small gains and a large family,—high rent, and low fever.

Jem was now the happiest of boys; that is, he had as much bread as he could eat, and a little more work than he could do. But a humane, intelligent master put him in the way of doing it in the best manner. He was an improving lad. By the time he was out of his apprenticeship, he became a good workman. Bill had been put out of his

miseries by opportune suffocation in a narrow flue, belonging to the county member, at Marrowbone Hall,—Tom had *fallen* overboard, after a severe banging from his tyrant, and was gone to feed the lampreys of the Severn.—Jack was becoming almost as great a brute as the beasts he tended;—and the factory brother and sisters were slaved, gassed, and drubbed into a transfiguration tripartite of the yellow dwarf. But Jem was gay and rubicund as ever; well-grown, well-fed, well-taught,—a good-humoured, good-looking fellow as ever breathed.

Unluckily, the result of this even temper and comely aspect, was an early marriage. On finding that he could earn eighteen shillings a week, one of the prettiest lasses in Gloucestershire persuaded him that it was too large a sum for his single enjoyment; and Jem Willett, like Richard Willett before him, became a father at so early an age, that there was little chance of his surviving to become a grandfather. He chose to gird on the crown of thorns, without allowing time for the previous expansion of its roses. He chose to jump from boyhood to middle age,

without allotting a moment to the pleasures of youth.

Nevertheless, the plane and the chisel sped prosperously. Jem was never out of employ,—never sick,—never sorry. Children came; ay, and on one occasion, twins, who seemed to bring a blessing with them; for Jem Willett's household thrived in proportion to its increase.

But, alas! the sin which—ere the foundations of this earth were laid—marred the harmony of primeval heaven, is still predominant below.—The Willetts were ambitious! Jem's pretty wife had been three years in service in London, before a visit to her friends in Gloucester converted her into the wife of the handsome young carpenter; and poor Mary could not forget Cheapside; and had a hankering after St. Paul's Church-yard.—The High Street of Gloucester was not worthy to hold a candle to the Strand, among whose gay haberdashers' shops her green and salad days had passed. In the clear atmosphere of her country home, she pined after the smother of the metropolis; and, like others of her sex, from

Eve modernwards, contrived to win over her partner to her fault.

Her faithful Jem was accordingly taught to believe that there was no promotion for him in a country town ; that so good a workman might enjoy, in London, the wages of a cabinet-maker ; and that two days' journey with his family, in the Gloucester wagon, was all that was wanting to convert his eighteen shillings per week into six-and-thirty. They were before-hand with the world. They had seven-and-forty pounds to draw out of the savings' bank, to establish them in London. It showed a poor heart, according to Mary Willet, to sit down contented with their humble fortunes, when "happiness courted them in its best array."

After some prudential misgivings on the part of Jem, the woman persuaded him, and he did go. Their goods and chattels were accordingly sold off at considerable loss, but still so as to add some pounds to their capital ; and having put money in their purse, and stowed away their five children under the awning of the wagon which was to prove their chariot of fortune, away they snail's-

paced it, along that great western road which has conveyed to Hyde Park Corner so many aspirants after metropolitan promotion.

Few are destined to reach it in such piteous plight as Jem Willet and his wife! —Within eight miles of London, thanks to an insufficient lantern and inefficient wagoner, the huge vehicle was overturned into a paviour's hole, and Jem all but crushed into nothingness by the weight of a huge bale of merchandise.

The infant in his arms never breathed again! The mangled father was transported upon straw, in a light cart, to St. George's Hospital, with his family, all of whom were more or less injured by the accident; and, at the expiration of a year from their departure from the country, the Willetts were settled in a squalid lodging of a by-street in Chelsea, with three out of their five children remaining, and two pounds ten, out of their forty-nine.

There was misery in the little household —past, present, and in expectation. It was in vain that poor Mary cursed her restless

spirit as the cause of all. Her self-accusations yielded no fuel to their empty grate; no food to their hungry mouths. A severe injury received by Jem in the right shoulder, at the time of his accident, incapacitated him for the carpenter's bench, and all other manual labour; nor could the poor people devise any mode of gaining a living for a man who was no scholar, and had not connexions to back him in applications for employment as light porter to some house of business.

It was a sorry time. The winter was a hard one,—their money gone; even the last half-crown in their little treasury had been changed to purchase provisions for the day. Mary was eager with her husband to make an application for parochial relief, such as might be the means of getting them passed back into Gloucestershire. She knew they should be no better off there than in London. But it was their *own place*. They should hear familiar voices; their eyes would rest upon familiar spots; their hands be clasped in those of the humble friends of their childhood.—There would be somebody to look

upon their half-starved babes, and say, "God speed them!"

But Jem resisted. Though his early condition had familiarized him with the shame of pauperism, yet the independence his exertions had since achieved, had taught him pride. It was pleasanter to hope,—it was almost pleasanter to starve,—than confront that bitter tribunal, a Monday board.

Another day came; and Mary, who had looked so wistfully upon the last half-crown ere she could make up her mind to change it, found herself looking, with exactly the same shuddering, upon their last sixpence!—In the interim, their prospects had darkened. Jem had been refused work in various quarters, where he had flattered himself his crippled powers were still available.

"You don't look strong enough!" was the universal reply; and on returning from a grocer's, in Whitechapel, to whom he had taken a recommendation for employment in his warehouse, he found the eldest girl, a delicate slip of a thing, unable to bear up against the squalor and wretchedness with

which she was surrounded, suffering under a violent attack of ague; the disease, of all others, requiring the administration of wholesome nourishment.

"She will die,—she will follow her brother and sister!" faltered the poor fellow, rushing from the house, determined to seek for his sick child the parochial aid he had been too proud to seek for himself; and as he went along, the temptation was almost too strong to escape from the slow agonies of life, by plunging himself headlong into the Thames, that ran, temptingly, within reach.

It was December; and the dingy waters rippled on, like the waves of an unclean element, under a heavy autumnal fog that shut out all prospect of the sky. How different from the dancing waters of his own translucent Severn, the friend and companion of his merry childhood!—The reminiscence brought back careful thoughts of his dead brothers;—of his old mother, the inmate of a poor-house,—of toil and sorrow, hunger and cold;—till Jem Willett could not help feeling that it was a sorry world for those who, like himself, were born to work

out the condemnation of the first human sin.

His eyes were red with unshed tears, his nose blue with heart-chill and a north-west wind, his features pinched, his looks meagre; it might almost be added, his "bones were marrowless—his blood was cold." Yet a sort of fierce striving against evil fortune, caused him to maintain a firm demeanour, and erect his head to the utmost stretch, as he was about to enter the workhouse-gate.

Such was the origin of the after fortunes of Jem Willett!—Ere he crossed the fatal threshold, he found himself civilly accosted by a solemn individual, who announced himself as "Mr. Screw, the eminent Knights-bridge upholsterer;" and the long rambling conversation that ensued, ended in Jem Willett's quitting the premises, "attached to the establishment" of his new acquaintance, at twelve shillings a-week wages, and the promise of advancement.

He was about to be converted into a MUTE!

Jem was to enter upon his functions on

the morrow. He was in fact as great an acquisition to Screw, as Screw to him. The Knightsbridge upholsterer and undertaker having been bereaved of one of his standard Mutes, by the great master and commander of his gloomy trade, was sadly at a loss for a fellow of sufficiently doleful countenance to match the fine funereal face of the survivor.

“Poor Bill Hobbs, who was dead and gone, was a treasure; a man whom it brought tears into the eyes of the multitude to look on. He confessed he never expected to find an adequate substitute for Bill Hobbs. All he could expect of his new adherent was, to do his best, — that is, look his worst; and if he gave satisfaction to the customers, he might count upon eighteen shillings a-week, at the close of the winter. Perhaps if the influenza was about and it proved a good burying season, something might be done sooner.”

Poor Jem was beside himself with joy! Such an unexpected stroke of good fortune, — such manna in the desert, — such corn in Egypt! — His wife wept for gladness when

she heard of his promotion. To be sure, it was not exactly the line of employment he would have solicited; not exactly the duty that the fair, chubby, laughing Jem seemed brought into the world to perform. But misery brings down the spirits to an incalculably low level; and Jem seemed to fancy it might be satisfactory to his poor disabled frame, to array itself in a decent garb of woe, and stand sentinel at the gates of death.

During the first week, he gave unqualified satisfaction. No advance having been made to him by Screw, whose name was prophetic of his nature, Jem had to endure the torment of taking up his position on a foggy morning, without having broken his fast, after sitting up all night beside the pallet of his groaning child; and so piteous was his countenance, under sorrows and privations thus accumulated, as to excite the envy of his sable brother, as well as the admiration of his new master.

Screw looked upon him as a Mute of genius. His countenance was something between that of Quixote, Reynolds's Ugo-

lino, and the man who "drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night." His stomach was empty; his heart sinking with the idea of the family affliction, of which he was the outward and visible sign; his soul sickening at the whispered allusions of his professional brother on the opposite side the door, to "stiff'uns and black jobs, shrouds and winding sheets, pickaxes and shovels!" The last funeral in which Jem had borne a part, was that of one of his own beloved babes; and he could not hear a coffin made a theme for jesting!

Mr. Screw and his men, when they drew up the hearse and mourning coaches to the door, were as much struck with the appropriate air and features of the new Mute, as some might be by the proportions of the Venus de Medicis. He was an honour to the profession;—tall and solemn as a cypress;—a frontispiece, foretelling the nature of a tragic volume. Screw even went so far as to advance him eight shillings, for the use of his family, on the Thursday night; an act of liberality unprecedented in the annals of his establishment. Nay, as the scarlet fever was

rife in Chelsea, before the close of the month, the new Mute was raised to the promised modicum of eighteen shillings per week.

All now went well in his little household. The young ravens were fed, and Mary's clothes gradually returned from the pawnbroker's; and though Jem's vocation was still loathsome to him,—though he could scarcely restrain his tears when he saw white feathers nodding over the vehicle that bore forth the little coffin of some only hope from the roof of its parents, to be cast into the wintry earth,—the sensibility which made his calling thus distasteful rendered him invaluable to his master.

While the Mutes of other establishments, or former Mutes of his own, degraded their scarfs and hatbands, by being seen tossing off a glass of gin or a well-crested pot of porter, with their insignia of office fluttering about them, thereby bringing into discredit the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious undertakership, Jem was always dumb as death, and moulded in clay that required no wetting. He was, in fact, a model-Mute.

The merits of the man perhaps contri-

buted something to the prosperity of the master ; for, in the course of a year or two, Screw removed from his suburban abode to one of the handsomest streets at the west end ; set up a shop, with a gothic front, on whose door, in lieu of panes, there figured two funeral escutcheons ; with death's head, cross-bones, and "*Resurgam*," painted, achievement-wise, on one ; and a street-door, guarded by two Mutes, holding handkerchiefs to their eyes, on the other—for the off-Mute of which pictorial representation, Jem Willett was supposed to have sat to the artist. Above the escutcheons, was inscribed in letters of gold, "Funerals Performed."—PERFORMED !—ay, just as *Macbeth* is "performed" by Macready, or *Nicholas Flam* by Farren !—On the other windows were pasted announcements of "Houses to Let ; furnished or unfurnished ;" Mr. Screw having taken upon himself the trade of providing mansions for the quick, as well as for the dead.

Upon his removal to this aristocratic warehouse, Screw felt in conscience bound to raise the wages of his Mutes to the level of

those bestowed upon their black gentlemen by Gillow, Banting, and other fashionable purveyors to the last wants of humanity; and Jem, in the enjoyment of thirty shillings per week, lost all recollection of his former woes.

“Who was it persuaded you to come to Lon’on, I should like to know?”—was now the favourite query of his wife. “How would a workman, with his bread-winner disabled, have found means of earning thirty shillings a-week, in Gloucester?”

And if Jem refrained from replying that, had he never come to Lon’on, his shoulder would never have been broken in the socket, when he might have enjoyed the same wages, with a less noisome occupation, it was because he was too good-natured to cause vexation to his wife.

The Willetts had now their share of the good things of this world. They ate, drank, and were merry. After burial-hours, Jem might be seen taking his pipe and glass, in winter at “The Undertakers’ Arms,” in summer at “The Adam and Eve” tea-gardens. Care came no longer near him. He

said to himself, "Soul, take thine ease,"—and his soul did as it was bid!—

But, alas! ruin was laying a train under his feet!—Amid all this jollification, his features lost their sharpness,—his complexion, its pallor,—his limbs, their dignified gauntness. The ruddy tints of his Severn days came back in undiminished brilliancy; nay, his very nose became "celestial rosy red."—An incipient paunch was rounding.—Othello's occupation was gone!

In the overflowing of his heart, he could not forbear, now and then, a jovial word with his brother Mute; and, in the awful discharge of their duties at the doors of defunct peers of the realm or ministers of state, he was betrayed, by absence of mind, into humming snatches of a tune, haunting his imagination after the carouse of the preceding night.—The starveling Mute was become a jolly dog!—It was no longer "Willow, willow," with him, but "Wine, mighty wine!"—

Under such circumstances, it was scarcely wonderful that Screw and Co. should require his resignation to be sent in. One Saturday

night, in Midsummer time (when the morning sun shines with tell-tale brightness on the minutiae of the rites of sepulture), Willett was requested to give his receipt in full, on receiving his final one pound ten. The "establishment" required his services no longer. He was superseded;—not superannuated, but super-gladdened.

The foreman said to him, like Apollo, in the song, to "Voice, fiddle, and flute,"
"NO LONGER BE MUTE!"

His jolly face reflected discredit on the house. At a funeral, he was the impersonation of a practical joke,—a figure of fun,—a parody upon the tragedy;—a jest upon a grave subject. He was like *Æsop's* weasel in the meal-tub; the only difference, that Jem was turned *out* of his luxurious berth, while the weasel was forced to remain *in*. Though twice the man he was when taken into Screw's establishment, he was not half so good for the undertaker's purpose. He was as much out of place as a fat harlequin, or gouty rope-dancer.—He was, in short, a merry Mute!

Poor Jem is, at this moment, looking out

for a new place. He is too tender-hearted for a beadle, though the gold-laced hat would mightily become him. But our friend is unconsciously dwindling into such a condition, as may entitle him, a second time, to the honours of Muteship. As Napoleon became a second time Emperor, it is by no means impossible, that the now sorrowing father of four needy children may shortly return to the establishment of Messrs. Screw and Company, — thin, lanky, and dolorous of form and feature as may become—a MUTE.

THE LITTLE LORD.

THE fine writers of the day,—chiefly personages who manufacture their articles like Sir Richard Blackmore his poetry, “to the rumbling of their chariot wheels,”—are sticklers for the doctrine of compensation. When their haunch of venison proves done to a turn,—their pine-apple ripe and well-flavoured,—their claret clear,—and their friend and gossip disposed to adjudge the same merit to their own arguments,—the guinea-a-liners sit down to indite their dissertations, dipping their golden pen into a silver standish to describe the impartiality wherewith Providence dispenses its favours to the denizens of this little planet.

It may be so. The guinea-a-liners know best. Gout, they assure us, rarely visits the

damp hovels of Ireland; while the broad, good-humoured face of a Yorkshire farmer's wife retains the hue and outlines of youth and beauty long after the Almack's Dowager has grown lank and faded. It is, of course, needless to balance the account with allusions to typhus fever, or the wasted paupers of the Poor Law bastilles. The chief object of fine writing is striking contrast,—moral antithesis,—light and shade. Redundance of example puzzles the reader. "Look on this picture and on that!"—"Eyes right—eyes left!" is sufficient.

In describing, therefore, the juvenile generations of the kingdom, let Alpha and Omega suffice. The intervening rubbish we leave to preparatory schools and a genteel mediocrity. The Mobility—the Nobility—the Little Pauper—the Little Lord—constitute the Night and Morning of the day.

We plead guilty to a tender leaning towards children. Like Burchell in the Vicar of Wakefield, "we love them as harmless little men," and are seldom without a penny whistle, or piece of gingerbread in our

pocket. Children of a larger growth are too apt to conspire against the peace of mind and ease of body of these innocent Lilliputians. From the days of Herod to those of the promoters of Infant Labour, the monsters of this world have been prone to direct their persecutions against those tender creatures, whom ogres used to eat, but whom Christians kill for other purposes than the table.

This is a fearful consideration! During the first dozen years of the present century war indulged itself in the expenditure of a couple of hundred thousand human lives per annum; the three kingdoms offering up their weekly but hearty prayers for the Most High Court of Parliament, which came down so handsomely with its premium for wholesale butchery. Now that we no longer murder on so grand a scale, the wickedness of human nature finds vent in minor issues. Greenacre and Courvoisier assassinate their mistress and master, and a vast proportion of arsenic is distributed in pennyworths in various counties of the United Kingdom, to the unjustifiable homi-

cide of her Majesty's lieges. But the said master and the mistress, and most of the people put to death by medicated tea or hasty pudding, were old enough to exercise their own fists or judgment in self-defence; and it is consequently only the unhappy infants upon whom the Mrs. Brownriggs of modern times wreak their barbarities, that *really* move our commiseration.

The Rabbin who first devised the idea of a babe in bliss as a hovering form of beauty, all face and wings, having no extremities to be exposed to the whips and stings of fate, betrayed profound foresight. So long as a child hath anything whippable about it, chastisement will not be wanting. Your cherub is the only babe as happy as an angel.

Still, it seems hard that the privileged persecutors of these tender innocents should not show *some* respect to persons, in the persons of their victims. If a certain number of children are to be tormented to death or made miserable, annually, to gratify the malignity of middle-aged persons, why concentrate their vengeance on a single class? Why not some impartiality in the selec-

tion of the sufferers? Why not draw lots for the objects of their cruelties, as in the case of a siege or shipwreck, where chance is made to pick out the victims for the edge of the sword or bars of the gridiron?

Above all, why must the offspring of the highest personages in the realm be selected for torture? Is it because their ancestors bled for us at Agincourt, or waste their breath for us in the House of Peers, that the custom of the country condemns them, from the moment they draw breath, to slow torture? Is it in gratitude for the activity of our nobles in foreign conquest or national legislation, that we have created a race of martyrs, such as we see presented in fashionable portraits by Chalon, Grant, and others of the infant aristocracy of Great Britain?

The first happiness of a child is freedom of action,—or in other words, ample space and verge enough for kicking and screaming. As regards its powers of gratifying the eyes of others, a young child, we conceive, cannot be too simply apparelled. Its garments should be warm in winter, light in summer;

capable of easy adjustment, and frequent renovation. As five minutes suffices to make the cleanest child as dirty as a chimney-sweep, five minutes ought to suffice to make it completely clean again. To insure this, silk ought never to figure in its attire. All should be amenable to the purification of soap and water. Its own fair bright face, its truthful eyes, and dimpled mouth, are a sufficient adornment.

But though advocates for freedom of action, we cannot forgive the irrational cruelty which exposes the little naked arms of a newborn infant to the nipping of a bitter winter's day, its sleeves tied up with satin ribands, to gratify the vanity of the authors of its days at the risk of its life, for the display of two little flaccid unformed arms, most unmeet to wrestle with the wintry blast. An infant's cheek, too, tenderer than a rose-leaf, ought to be approached only by objects soft and susceptible as itself,—its mother's bosom, or swan's down, or the simplest covering. Instead of this, the wantonness of our folly places upon its head a finely-embroidered cap, with half-a-dozen borders of stiff and

well-crimped lace, on which, when it lies down to sleep, it must experience the torments of Regulus.

To render the poor little creature as ridiculous as it is wretched, this foolscap is surmounted by a cockade of lace or riband, without grace or symmetry, resembling those with which we decorate our coach-horses; and, lest when we permit the babe to take the air, it should indulge a hope to be rid of this strange incumbrance, we place over the cap a huge hat *à la Henri Quatre*, with another cockade, and a plume of feathers; —crushing the little unformed features by the preponderance of the Otranto-like machine, and giving its poor little feeble neck, scarcely capable of self-support, a weight to carry, well calculated to inure its patience to the future burthens of life!

Of the first steps of these innocent martyrs it cannot be said that

Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute.

To entitle them to walk, their little feet are encased in shapely shoes of morocco, such as would have insured corns to th

nus de Medicis, or Apollo Belvidere. The child's waist is at the same time encircled by a prodigious sash, with bows and ends large enough for the effigy of Queen Anne in St. Paul's churchyard; and its robe or tunic be-frilled, be-flounced, be-cuffed, be-garnished, be-Mechlined, be-Valencienned, till the exhortation "be not puffed up!" seems prematurely in request.

"Mind your frock, Lord Domesday!" — "Lady Jane! take care of your beautiful lace!" — "Lord Alfred, I won't have you play with that 'ere nasty dog, a-jumping on your velvet dress!" — are the constant outcries of the authorities. The Lady Janes and Lord Alfreds must not walk in the sun for fear of their complexions; must not roll on the grass or in the hay, or romp, or ride, or run, or do anything that tends to the development of their little frames, or the fortification of their constitutions. If they escape infanticide at the hands of the head-nurse, who leaves them naked upon her lap, with the thermometer below freezing-point, in order to go through her routine of ablutions,—if they survive to be squeezed into

the tight shoes, and screwed into the stays and curl-papers, — if they defy the united efforts of nurses, apothecaries, baby-linen warehouses, and governesses, to reduce them to feebleness, peevishness, and despair, the British constitution is richly deserving all the laudations bestowed upon it in this and other countries.

We must again assert it to be an act of partiality on the part of the Fates, that, as some children are born with a silver spoon in their mouths, and some with a wooden ladle, the silver spoon should be made to convey only decoction of rhubarb, or senna-tea, and the ladle, pure spring water.

While the little Lord and little Lady are thus grievously tormented, the bantlings of pauper life are allowed to sprawl unmolested, squall unsilenced. No impulse of *theirs* is checked by the close-fitting of their ragged garments. They enjoy free exercise of limb and lungs. No one excoriates *their* epidermis with much scrubbing, or brings on catarrhs by the prolongation of their toilet. Their lives, like their garments, sit easy. *They* may play with the cat,—they

may make dirt pies,— they may make themselves happy.

If they want to sail their walnut-shell boat, there is the nearest puddle;—if they want to fly their kite, the common is at their door. The woods are theirs, with their early violets and late blackberries — their squirrels and birds' nests. To *their* imagination, the trees are made to be climbed; rivers to be bathed in. The free air is all their own: they breathe it uncompressed by stays, unharassed by the badgering of a nursery governess. They look the sun in the face, fearless that in return it should visit their cheek too roughly. *They* are accustomed to rough visitings.

Instead of being tormented about turning out their toes, their toes are allowed to enjoy a state of nature. Instead of being engirded with a backboard, their backs support a sheaf of bulrushes, or basketful of acorns or beechmast; or perhaps some little loving younger brother or sister, offering kisses in payment of its fare. Fruit not being interdicted by Dr. Magnesia, they snatch their sloes from the hedge, their

strawberries from the wood, their nuts from the hazelbush. They have no notion of a juvenile fancy-ball, with two months' training beforehand from Madame Michau. But on May-day they rise with the lark (and who is better up to a lark than a child of the woods and fields?) adorn themselves with garlands of wild hyacinths, and caper with all their hearts and souls round the hawthorn-bush on the village-green!

Who invented cowslipballs?—The children of the poor.—Who invented daisy-chains?—The children of the poor.—Who made the first necklaces of sparrows' eggs?—The children of the poor.—Who originated leap-frog, blindman's buff, and all other boisterous diversions?—The children of the poor.—Unobstructed by finery and frippery, they pursue the sports of childhood with childhood's reckless impulses of joy. Instead of the tedious airing, smothered up in a nurse's lap,—instead of the monotonous saunter, handcuffed by a nurse's authority,—instead of the discipline of the school-room, the preventive physicking of the apothecary inflicted upon their miserable rivals, the off-

sets of pauper life bask in the sunshine or freshen in the shade.

As if to counterbalance the cares of after-life, the little ragged urchins hunt their butterflies in inconsiderate delight. A gallop on the tinker's donkey is a happier thing than the formal ride under the stiff documentation of a family coachman or riding-master: nay, a swing on a gate is a happier thing, or a see-saw across the carpenter's bench.

Liberty must be a god-like blessing; or Spartans and Spaniards, Greeks and Canadians, the East and the West, the North and the South, would not fight for it as they do. We sincerely trust that the next crusade or war of liberation attempted in Christendom will purport to enfranchise the juvenile aristocrats of these enlightened realms from the manacles, handcuffs, strait-waistcoats, foolscaps, backboards, stocks, fine clothes, and other instruments of torture, which have been brought to light by means of the philanthropic and well-intentioned designs of the leading portrait-painters of the day.

Enough for these "hereditary bondsmen"

that the slavery of the Order awaits them on arriving at years of discretion;—that they will have to preside at charity dinners, agricultural meetings, and archæological associations. Enough that they will have to listen to the prosiest of debates in their own House, and be unable to silence the smartest of debates in the other. Enough that they will be forced to pay the piper, to whose tunes it is denied them to dance.

A whole life of pomp and show—of sound and finery signifying nothing—awaits them in their progress towards their crimson-velvet coffins. Christian charity, therefore, demands that, now all other slavery is abolished, the mercy of the Crown ought to be extended towards those helpless victims, languishing in the fetters of their silken leading-strings—the little Lords of the great Ladies of the land!

THE BRITISH COLONIST.

A CONFESSION.

I AM a stranger in England. In every other country in the world I call myself an Englishman; being born of British parents, in a British colony, speaking no other language (a strong evidence of English extraction), and possessing the usual reserve, awkwardness, and touch-me-if-you-dare-ishness of a true Briton. But I am not the less a stranger in the country of my fathers, in which I had the honour to make my first appearance some twelve months ago.

It is an article of religion with colonists to instil, double-grained, into their children the principles and prejudices of the mother-country. Aware that the fosterhood of national institutions and example is wanting to

mould the character of their offspring into due pragmatism, they exaggerate a little on certain points, to leave room for evaporation.

The great glory of *my* excellent parents was to enlarge upon the distinction of their mother-country in the eyes of the universe as "the LAND OF LIBERTY!" British freedom was the favourite text of my father's domestic preachments; and as soon as I could squall I learned to expand my lungs in the burthen of the song, that "Britons never would be slaves."

The liberty of the subject appeared to my boyish imagination as exclusively English an enjoyment, as roast-beef and plum-pudding. The inhabitants of other European countries seemed to be walking about in handcuffs or strait waistcoats, unsuspecting of their enthrallment. The contented prosperity of Austria I regarded as little better than idiocy. Russia, trembling under the knout of autocracy, was a craven hound; Turkey a corpse from which an imperial vampire had sucked the blood; Spain, a plantation nigger, arrayed in a suit of gaudy calico, beguiling its

sense of abasement by dancing to a tom-tom ; France, the sprucely-liveried and educated slave, who has (like those of New York) learned to wait at table and play on the fiddle. But, from Spitzbergen to Cape Matapan, not a living body in Europe that could call its soul its own, saving the favoured inhabitant of the glorious British empire !

With this sentiment pervading my being, I behaved with suitable arrogance towards the offsets of less-favoured nations. Long before I had tails to my jacket I brought forward the boast of being an Englishman, whenever I fancied myself put upon ; as a policeman brandishes his life-preserver.

My delight, therefore, may easily be conjectured when I set foot last year on the god-like land, which has the gift of enfranchising all who approach its favoured shore.

“ Hurrah for the land of liberty ! ” cried the sailors the moment we saw the Needles ; and as heartily did I join in their cheering as though I had been languishing all my life under the tyranny of a pacha. I fancied that now, for the first time since I was born, I was going to enjoy the free use of my

limbs and faculties, and on landing began to extend them, with a vague consciousness of delight, that proved highly entertaining to the little boys who were idling on the quay. They uttered, indeed, a variety of odd sounds, which I mistook for Hebrew, knowing that Jews abound in the mother country; but which I have since learned to constitute the dialect called "slang."

That night I lodged in an hotel, and the first thing I noticed in my rooms was a printed notice that no smoking was allowed in the chambers; which, to a person accustomed to his cigar the last thing at night and first in the morning, is as a veto on his sleep or his devotions.

Next morning the kinsman who breakfasted with me undertook to introduce me to the metropolis, and instal me in lodgings. My baggage being still at the Custom-House, I had to apologize to Mr. W. for any informality in my toilet. But when about to sally forth I saw him look aghast; and after much hemming and hawing, he informed me that it was out of the question to make my appearance in a travelling-cap.

"My hat-box is with the rest of my baggage," said I, "and as a total stranger here, no one will notice me."

"I am not a stranger," pleaded my cousin W., "and the thing would be thought preposterous. Let us stop at the nearest hatter's, and purchase a hat."

This was easy enough. But even at the hatter's, I had a lesson of subjection to learn. Accustomed to the exigencies of a hotter climate, I chose a broad-brimmed beaver, which my companion asserted to be as much out of the question as the cap.

"You would be taken for a Quaker! None but a very old man could venture on such a hat."

Mistaking reverse of wrong for right, I selected a very narrow brim, and again stood corrected. At length the exact longitude and latitude admissible by the tyrannies of fashion being adjusted, I cocked my paragon of hats over one eye, and was leaving the shop, when my cousin entreated me in a fervent and kinsmanly tone to set it straight. "I should be taken for a tiger!"

A little mortified, I betook myself to a

very ordinary source of colonial consolation. As I might not take my ease (in the shape of my cigar) in mine inn, I might at least take it in the street. But, on producing my cigar-case, W. again interfered.

"You are now," said he, "in Pall Mall. To smoke here, in broad daylight, would be considered ungentlemanly."

All that remained for me was to pocket the affront, and the cigar-case.

A moment afterwards, as I endeavoured to detain him, that I might admire a display of forced-fruit in a shop-window, such as I had never expected to see under the skies of the land of liberty, he begged me to pass on. "We should be taken for snobs if we stared into the shop-windows."

As a balm to my galled sides, I proposed calling upon a mutual relative residing at the West End, to whom I was desirous of being presented.

"It is only twelve o'clock!" pleaded my cousin.

"And will not the family be *up* at that hour?"

"*Up*? Oh! yes. They are early risers.

But it is too soon for a morning visit. It is not the custom in London to go out till after two o'clock; and visitors are consequently not expected earlier."

"But, if every one goes out at the same time, you can have no hope of finding your friends at home?"

"Very true. But you must take your chance. It would be thought monstrous to pay a morning visit to Lady R. at this time of day."

My attention was drawn from his lecture by the sight of a beautiful woman, who passed us in a carriage. I suppose my enthusiasm was somewhat ejaculatory; for Mr. W. implored me to moderate my transports. On seeing the carriage stop at a shop, I proposed to go in, and make some small purchase, to afford me another glimpse.

But he would not hear of it! The shop was a milliner's. "Our object would be too apparent;" said he. "If the lady be respectable, it is an offence to *her*; if *not*, we should be making fools of *ourselves*."

Everything that I proposed was absurd and irregular! Even when I stopped short be-

side a crossing, and, taking out my purse, sought deliberately among its contents for sixpence to bestow on a mutilated sweeper, (when, as usual in such cases, all the sixpences proved to be shillings). "Come on, for heaven's sake!" cried he, impatiently, "it looks so odd to be stopping here!"

I was sadly disappointed in the limitation of my morning's pleasures; for my cicerone objected to taking more than a passing glance at the public buildings of the West End. But I comforted myself with the prospect of a pleasant dinner; my cousin having invited me to dine with him at the Clarendon, which, he informed me, was the best eating-house in London.

At seven, I met him there by appointment, and I suspect that, even enhanced by the hat of his selection, my dress did not come within the strict letter of London law; for when I made my appearance he looked singularly uncomfortable. While we were waiting for dinner he gave me a hint not to whistle. In the course of it he took occasion to inform me that spitting in a London room amounted to ostracism. When dinner was over, I pro-

posed, on seeing by the evening papers that it was opera night, to go and hear Grisi.

"But we are not dressed!" said my cousin.

"We can go into the pit."

"Not in a morning dress. We look as if we had come off a journey."

"But since we have no ladies to attend, surely it cannot signify?"

It signified much. In the land of liberty people did not go to the pit of the opera in frock-coats and plaid trowsers.

"Since we cannot go to the opera," said I, "suppose we take our chance of finding Lady R. at home this evening?"

"This *evening*? She would think us mad to go to her house, without an invitation."

"But, surely, such near connexions—" I was beginning.

"My dear fellow! it is a liberty that is scarcely taken in London, between brothers and sisters!"

There was nothing for it but to go home to bed.

It was, perhaps, because aware how much he had startled and vexed me, that my worthy relative called on me a few mornings

afterwards with news that Lady R. was desirous to make my acquaintance, and that he had procured me a ticket for Almack's that evening, from one of the patronesses with whom he was intimate, to facilitate the introduction; because having called at her house without finding her, "it would look odd" if I went again.

To Almack's, accordingly, I accompanied him. He appointed half-past eleven to call for me, which I thought late, and which he assured me was early; and into the ball-room we proceeded together. I entered boldly; for *this* time I knew my dress to be unpugnable.

"As you are in mourning," was my cousin's answer that morning, to my inquiries, "you cannot be much at fault. Everything black but your neckcloth, and you will do very well. Willis has already arranged your hair; and your white gloves are a capital fit."

As I said before, therefore, I entered the ball-room, feeling entitled to look about me *à discrétion*, till the arrival of Lady R.; whom I found, from my companion, had a private

party to attend. But there was enough to occupy my attention : those pretty, graceful girls, with their enormous redundance of petticoat, and so little to cover them besides, —and the half-dozen supercilious middle-aged ladies, seated apart from the rest, on a bench at the end of the room, like the bishops I had seen the preceding night at the House of Lords, and nearly as old and sour ! Several seats near them being vacant, I was about to sit down ; but W. informed me that as a stranger it would be “thought odd.”

On my presentation to Lady R. and her daughters, I certainly thought *them* odd, and saw little to applaud in the deportment of my English connexions ; for the two girls tittered while I was making my bow, and even the mother bit her lips to avoid a smile.

“It is your own fault !” cried W. pettishly, when I took him aside, to complain of their want of civility. “What *could* tempt you to come here in those infernal trowsers ?”

Now, the trowsers he was pleased to call “infernal” were neither more nor less than

a pair of pantaloons of watered silk, such as are esteemed the height of the fashion in my native colony.

"You told me," said I, with some indignation, "that in a complete suit of black I *could* not be wrong!"

"Suit of *black*?—Yes!—Of course!—But how was I to suppose it possible there existed such a thing in your wardrobe as watered silk trowsers? How could I imagine that pantaloons were ever made now-a-days in anything but cloth?"

In the course of half-an-hour he came to me in a state of dewy emotion, and advised me strongly to go home.

"You are the laughing-stock of the room," and if you do not wish to be caricatured, or to get into the Sunday papers, disappear as quietly as you can, and do not come here again till you have completely refitted yourself."

Of course I did not stay to be told twice; and next day, assured him that I had given such orders to the tailor recommended by himself, as would insure my appearing at the next Almack's in such a suit of sables

as a gentleman is permitted to wear in the land of liberty.

"I fear you must content yourself with exhibiting them elsewhere than at Almack's," he replied. "Your dress last night excited so absurd a sensation, that my fair friend, the patroness, reproached me bitterly with having got her into such a scrape. The other patronesses complimented her cruelly on having the *moiré* dandy on her list."

"I don't know what you mean by your 'fair friend, the patroness,'" cried I in a pet; "for an uglier set of old cats than those you showed me, I never beheld!"

"My dear young friend," he gravely replied, "take care what you are about: Such persons as those to whom you allude are never either old or ugly. It is inadmissible in good society to talk in the tone you are now using of the ladies in question."

"Since they trouble their heads about my unmentionables, surely I may trouble mine with their rouged faces and false curls!" cried I.

But he was already out of the room; and I saw clearly that for the rest of my stay in

town, *his* introduction would be of little service.

Still, I fancy I might have done better by sticking to the counsels of one who had certainly no interest in misleading me ; for every step I made on my own account, proved a *faux pas* ! Some nights afterwards, being at the theatre on a sultry night, and beset with offers of oranges by the women in attendance, I concluded that were it not the custom to take such refreshments in the playhouses, they would not have been offered, and rashly peeled an orange in the box where I had obtained a seat. The two gentlemen between whom I was seated, after contemplating me as they would have surveyed an ourang-outang, rose, and quitted the box ! I instantly conjectured that some peculiar offence must be conveyed by eating an orange ; for, while leaning against the rails in the park the preceding day, to look at the carriages, I had refreshed myself in a similar manner, and excited the same disgust. Oranges, like cigars, are apparently tabooed.

It was almost a comfort to find that what is called the season was nearly over. For the

conventional tyrannies of London would scarcely pursue me in the tour I projected; and in the provinces, at least, I should enjoy those immunities of the land of liberty, so long the *beau idéal* of my imagination.

Having encountered my cousin, Lady R. coming out of the opera a night or two before I left town, I ventured to take leave of her; and as it perhaps went against her conscience to have been so little hospitable towards my father's son, she invited me to take her seat in Northamptonshire on my way to the North. It was not for some time afterwards I discovered that the invitation was accorded only to engage me in conversation, and prevent my offering my arm to Miss R. to assist her to the carriage. "I was just the sort of Hottentot," Lady R. had observed, "who would have felt no scruple about appropriating the arm of one of her daughters, though Lord Alfred and the young Marquis of Walsingham were standing by, engaged in conversation with my cousins!"

In the frankness of an unsuspecting heart, however, to Hurst Parva I went; and having

arrived by the mail at the neighbouring post-town before daybreak, slept there, and proceeded in a postchaise to breakfast with Lady R. As I stood paying the post-boy under the portico, while my portmanteau was taken into the house, I perceived through the plate-glass windows of an adjoining room that I was an object of curiosity to a large party assembled there, all of whom were watching my proceedings, and several laughing immoderately; from which I concluded that I was come either at an unseemly hour, or in an unseemly mode of conveyance. My *entrée* into the crowded breakfast-room was therefore uncomfortable enough, more especially as Lady R., while receiving me observed, "Your letter, announcing the favour you intended me, is probably still on the road; for I had no intimation of your visit."

If she did not say that it was an undesired, as well as an unexpected honour, she certainly looked it; whereupon, in pity to the shortness of her memory, I reminded her that, in parting in the Crush-room at the opera, I told her that I should pass through Northamptonshire the first week in August.

"Yes; I remember there was some mention of your going to Scotland," said she. - "But I concluded I should hear from you in the interim. However, I rejoice to find that you are able to spend a day with us on your tour."

I was puzzled and abashed. Did spending a day imply that I was also to spend the night; or was I to return to——, and sleep? In the course of the morning, I should perhaps be able to discover; and I therefore determined to stick fast by her ladyship when the rest of the party dispersed for walking or driving. Compassionating the *ennui* I might be supposed to feel, as the only man in the morning room where the ladies sat at work, she repeatedly informed me that "there was a good billiard table in the hall; that I should find the library stored with the newest books; that there were saddle horses at my disposal in the stable, if I wished to ride." But I knew when I was well off, and stuck by the worsteds and floss-silk.

At last a faint whisper from the younger Miss R. to one of her guests of "Shall we *never* get rid of this man!" apprized me that

I was *de trop* ; on which I betook myself to the room to which the servants informed me my baggage had been conveyed, for the remainder of the day ; though as I went up stairs, I saw the horses bringing round to the hall door, and longed to join the party in their ride. Wrong again, it seems ! I had been *expected* to expiate my importunities by forming part of their escort.

When the party was fairly off, I sauntered in the park ; and, after a pleasant walk of a mile or two, and passing through several open gates, flung myself at full length to rest upon a bench under some spreading beech trees. A party of ladies approached me whom I did not recognize ; but, concluding them to belong to the large party of Lady R., I took off my hat as they passed. Ten minutes afterwards, a jackanapes in livery came and asked me what I was doing there ?

I told him I was resting myself.

“ So he saw ! ” was his impertinent reply. “ Was I acquainted with Lord Runtingham ? ”

I asked him, of course, what concern that might be of his ?—but not choosing to affect

acquaintance with a nobleman I had never heard off, replied in the negative.

“Then what business had I, pray, to intrude, as I had done, upon them ladies?” He ended, in short, with threatening me with a constable; and, having taken me saucily by the arm to enforce his request that I would walk off, I knocked him down.

A couple of stablemen, who had been waiting at a distance, now came up and collared me; and, in spite of all I could urge, I was marched off between them to the parson of the parish, to be examined as a rogue and vagabond. To the magistrate, however, my explanations were perfectly satisfactory.

“A stranger in England, the guest of Lady R., I was not aware of having quitted her ladyship’s premises, or trespassed upon Lord Runtingham’s private grounds; still less that I had taken the liberty of bowing to Lady Runtingham, and her mother, the Duchess of H., without the honour of their acquaintance.” I proved to him that, though I had been mistaken for an adventurer, I was only an ignoramus.

For my own sake, I determined to keep to

myself this disagreeable adventure. But, alas! the Runtings, the nearest neighbours of my cousin, formed part of the dinner party that day at Hurst Magna, and her ladyship was unsparing in her apologies. The Hurst party having dined the preceding day at Runtingham Park, she could not possibly surmise, she said, "that I was a visitor to Lady R. Nothing could have surprised her more than the discovery!"

And, unless I am much mistaken, one of the R's whispered a rejoinder of—"or, *us*, either!"

I need scarcely add that I made my visit at Hurst Magna as short as the bitterest inhospitality on the part of my hostesses could desire. But, having previously intended to spend a week or so with my English relatives, the plan of my journey was unsettled. I had appointed letters to be despatched to me at given times and places on the road, by my London agents; and, in the fear of missing those from home which were to acquaint me with the welfare of my parents, resolved to spend the interval at a decentish inn in an obscure post-town in Yorkshire, to which my

letters were to be addressed. I had books enough in my portmanteau to render the delay supportable; the environs of the town being sufficiently interesting to one as yet so little versed in the features of the mother country.

While still waiting for my letters, I was struck one day by the following paragraph in a London paper, which I took up on the counter of a stationer's shop, where I was making some purchases.

“MYSTERIOUS OCCURRENCE!—Considerable curiosity has been excited in a little market town, not a thousand miles from Leeds, by the arrival of a genteel youth, apparently of foreign extraction, a total stranger in the place, who has taken up his abode in the principal inn, and is supposed to be seeking temporary concealment, either from creditors or the pursuit of justice. He leads a secluded life, rises early, spends his days entirely alone in his chamber, dines moderately, and retires early to bed, giving not the smallest clue to his projects or connections. We may perhaps forward the ends of justice by stating that he is about five feet eight inches in

height, aquiline nose, light hair, and sandy whiskers. His linen is marked J. R."

Yes—positively!—Nothing further was wanting but to advertise me in the Hue and Cry!—And what had I done?—Taken up my abode in a house of entertainment, the master of which would have been handsomely paid at any moment he chose to present his bill,—kept early hours and sober habits,—and uttered no offensive word to man, woman, or child!

I addressed a letter to the editor of the paper, of which no notice was taken. On despatching a second, he condescended to inform me that the price of insertion would be one pound one. He had simply copied the statement from a provincial paper: the rectification must be demanded at the fountain-head.

In my explanation with the editor of the provincial paper, I got into a new quarrel; and was again taken before a magistrate, and this time fined forty shillings for upbraiding, in somewhat strong language, the scribbler who, to enliven his columns, had made so unwarrantably free with my reputation.

I remonstrated, and was threatened with the mill! Having been forced into the justice room by the constable in so compulsory a way as to render it impossible for me to take off my hat to the magistrate, I was voted insolent and disorderly, and the words "swell mob" were distinctly whispered. From the first, Sir John Dogberry "had clearly perceived with what sort of person he had to deal."

Everybody knows that when Pope Clement the Sixth bestowed the Fortunate Islands on the son of Louis of Bavaria, the British ambassador at Rome asked for his passport to go home and look after his property; because, on hearing the bells ring and drums beat in honour of the bestowal of the Fortunate Islands, he concluded no other country under the sun than his beloved land of Liberty could be intended.

Often had I laughed in my boyhood at the blunder of his excellency. I now began to perceive that the infatuation of my poor parents was scarcely less deplorable; and, sadly out of conceit with the country of my fore-

fathers, resolved, at the conclusion of a three months' tour in the Highlands, to make the best of my way homewards.

Already I had reached London, meaning to embark from the docks ; but, before I left England, I could not resist the temptation of a peep at Windsor Castle. And a peep it was fated to be; her Majesty and the court being in residence, which bars all possibility of access. I had heard so much of the majesty of the site, however, that even a glimpse was something.

Arrived by the train one Saturday evening, I contrived to see as much as could be examined from without, from the various quarters accessible ; and next morning, attended divine service in St. George's Chapel, with the view, (is it to my shame to confess it ?) not of saying my prayers, but of obtaining a sight of the Queen.

I know not what instinctive feeling of deference instigated me to assume an evening-dress on the occasion ; for, once in the chapel, I saw that what I knew from my parents, who were travellers in their youth,

to be EXACTED from attendants upon the royal mass at the Tuileries, was out of place at Windsor. I was the more provoked, from perceiving that so slight a deviation from the routine of custom sufficed to fix upon me the eyes of one of the least reverent congregations of which I ever formed a part.

When the service was over, I was struck by the highly indecorous manner in which disapproval of my costume was testified by the Windsorians. Even the police came and stared in my face, as though I were guilty of a misdemeanour. Unless I am much mistaken, one of them accompanied me home to my inn!

On arriving in town, the first person I happened to meet was my cousin W., in answer to whose inquiries, I informed him whence I was come, and whither I was going.

"You need scarcely have gone to Windsor for a sight of her Majesty," said he. "Two days hence, the Queen will open Parliament in person, and I will procure you a ticket of admission for the interior of the House of Lords."

It was the least he could do, in expiation of his preceding neglect.

The ticket and the day arrived, and I set off towards Westminster in my usual morning-dress. But lo ! as I proceeded through White-hall, I perceived that the ladies in the various carriages going in the same direction were attired in diamonds, feathers, and all the paraphernalia of court-dress. I had still time to rectify my error, and, hastening home, assumed the costume which had been made for me, with a view to the levee which I was fated never to attend. The delay had so unsettled my arrangements, that I arrived at the door of the House just as the Queen was entering.

Contrary, I fancy, to regulation, and thanks to my bag and sword, I was suffered to go in. But I thought the exon of the guard seemed surprised when he took my ticket, which, like all the rest, was a printed card, bearing no specific name. After following the royal *cortège*, I found myself standing nearer the throne than was altogether agreeable ; for several of the personages with white wands, and other insignia of

office, looked hard at me, as if revolving the distich of Hudibras:—

The thing is neither rich nor rare,
But how the devil gat it there?

In the interest of the scene before me, however, I lost all consciousness of the awkwardness of my position; and, so long as the Queen was engaged in reading her speech, was riveted, eye, ear, and heart, to her right royal performance of that right royal duty. My interest may have been a little *too* apparent; for, as the court was leaving the House of Lords at the conclusion of the speech, I saw an ill-looking man in a red roquelaure, having a white wand in his hand, address a few words as he went out to an usher of the House who stood near.

As soon as the last of the royal train disappeared, this individual, seeing that I did not stir, addressed me with the startling inquiry of “whether I belonged to the household?”

I suppose my confusion was pretty evident, as I answered in the negative; for he next took the liberty of asking me, “why, in *that*

case, I appeared in court-dress, and had followed the royal procession after the doors were closed to *the public* ?”

Somewhat nettled at what appeared just then an opprobrious designation, I answered that I had come in with my ticket ; of which he denied the possibility, as the exons would not have *received* a ticket from any person entering with the Queen.

My answer, probably, savoured of the indignation natural to any well-thinking individual accused of falsehood ; and, in answer to my proposition to be confronted with the grey-headed gentleman in a scarlet uniform to whom I had given my ticket, he requested me, more civilly, to follow him, and we hurried through the crowded gallery into a small room, where I concluded that the disagreeable mistake was about to be cleared up. Three or four strangers were assembled ; to one of whom, a keen-looking, middle-aged man, the usher whispered a few words in which the name of Lord — was audible.

Every eye was now turned towards me ; for it seems that the public functionary had

brought me into the presence of the inspector of police, on suspicion of being a pickpocket, having made his way on false pretences into the august assembly!

“A pickpocket!—Not he!” cried one of the persons present; and I began really to trust that I had found a friend; when, to my utter horror, he added, “This is the chap, sir, we were desired to keep an eye upon at Windsor. He was seen hovering about the Castle till dark, on Saturday last, in the most suspicious manner, evidently watching his opportunity to steal in!”

“And *steal off*, no doubt, with whatever else was to be stolen!” added a facetious idler who stood by.

“No, sir,—I fancy *not*. For he attended chapel next morning, and, by his dress and manner, gave unmistakeable tokens that his intellects were deranged. Lord bless you, sir, scarcely a month passes but we have crazy folks at Windsor!—It seems to be their first notion, when their heads get wrong, to come and have a look at the Queen.”

“Ay, a pretty sort of *look*!”—added the

good-natured witness. "Hatfield, Peg Nicholson, and Oxford to wit!"

Could mortal patience stand this!—*I*, the most loyal of the Queen's creatures, to labour under an imputation of regicide!—I lost my temper and my liberty!—

"Search him!" said the inspector; and, as nothing was found upon me but a well-filled purse, a handsome gold pencil-case, and a small paper of white powder, opinions were divided as to whose pocket I had picked, or into whose food the poison was to be insinuated.

It required, of course, some little time before analysis would determine that the powder was, according to my statement, carbonate of soda, which, since the injury to my digestion caused by my English misadventures, I have been forced to carry about with me;—or the testimony of my landlord tend to prove that the purse and pencil were my own, and myself one of the most harmless individuals extant. Narrowly indeed did I escape an examination at the Home Office; for I was afraid of provoking the reproaches of my cousin W., by sending for him to at-

test my identity, and extricate me from my dilemma.

The evening papers teemed, of course, with accounts of "DISTURBANCE AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS,"—"A PICKPOCKET IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,"—"LATEST PARTICULARS,"—"SUPPOSED ATTACK UPON HER MAJESTY,"—"THE WINDSOR LUNATIC AGAIN,"—"ACCUSATION OF HIGH TREASON," &c. &c. &c., all which were duly copied from the daily into the weekly papers. *One* Sunday print, more daring than the rest, placarded the blank walls in the metropolis with pea-green hand-bills, promising an extra sheet, to contain the biography of the supposed assassin of the Queen; to which a rival responded by an advertisement in Gothic characters a foot high, of "CONFES-
SION OF THE ASSASSIN."

If I did not commit regicide, I was uncommonly near committing *felo-de-se*! For there was my honourable patronymic at full length staring me in the face from all the palings and scaffold-posts between the Peacock at Islington and the Swan-with-two-necks in Lad Lane!

But, what remedy? In the land of liberty,

in dealing with an unhappy man, who has not tact to discover when he is to wear a white cravat, or when a black, or the exact meaning of fringed or plain linen in a court-circular, the freedom of the press is incontestable! They may say pretty nearly what they please: leaving you the remedy of making them suffer for it, provided you have fifteen hundred pounds or so to throw away in doing yourself justice.

But such a prosecution would be only multiplying the miseries of that most unhappy of victims to the conventional forms rendered patent by the tyranny of the mother country, a BRITISH COLONIST IN ENGLAND.

THE YOUNG LADY ON HER PREFERMENT.

IN consideration of the helplessness of their condition, and feebleness of their faculties, it is the custom in France to seclude young and tender females in the bosom of their families, under the guidance of those by whom their principles are to be perfected, till some fitting alliance presents itself, enabling them to make their appearance in society under the protection of a husband.

Selected by the prudence of affectionate parents, the spouse to whom their future happiness is entrusted, enjoys the felicity of witnessing their girlish delight when inaugurated into the recreations and diversions of the great world, of suggesting their friendships, and instigating their intimacies; of

ministering to the nascent vanities of their sex, and indicating elegant enjoyments, with which the fine arts and literature are destined to fill up their happy leisure.

They enter a ball-room for the first time on the arm of their husband. Their first opera is heard, their first ballet witnessed, by the side of their husband. Their first cachemire, first diamond necklace, first costly album, first well-stored book-case, is presented by their husband ; and the smile with which "*mon ami*" is thanked for these trivial but not worthless adjuncts to the pleasures of life, is not without its charm in the category of matrimonial satisfactions.

All the impulses of a Frenchwoman's after-life are necessarily copartite with those of the first individual who has shared her intimacy or diverted her attention from the lessons and *ennuis* of girlhood. Uninfluenced by previously conceived opinions or projects, she sees with the eyes of one close at whose side she was launched into the career of life. Her husband's friends, views, and expectations are exclusively hers. She has no leisure to look about and sigh after other modes of

existence. From the moment of her competence to act, she was thrown into the movement and business of life. At eighteen she becomes a mother, and the mistress of a family, surrounded by duties and pleasures; familiarized with the schemes and cares of her partner, participating in all his recreations, and already framing with him projects of future domestic happiness for the little creatures born to be their careful comfort.

Their son will be a rich landowner; the pretty little daughter of their worthy neighbours, Monsieur and Madame so and so, will make him a suitable wife. Their daughter, sharing equally in their inheritance, will have a fortune of twenty thousand pounds; the son of their relative, the Marquis de —, will (should he turn out according to his early promise, and the high reputation of his family,) make her a suitable husband. At a more advanced period, proposals to this effect are made to the two families. It is agreed that, should the young people evince no disinclination, the future husband is to make his personal advances on attaining the age of twenty-one. After a sufficient

intimacy to admit of mutual examination of temper and disposition, the project is to be abandoned, or the marriage concluded. A line of inheritance is thus secured ; and the happiness of a happy *ménage* rendered still happier by cheering the maturer period of domestic life with the sports and beauties of a new generation. Such are the results of that prudent and precautions measure, a *mariage de convenance* !

An English father, on the contrary, seems to bestow less care upon the training and engagements of his daughters than upon those of his race-horses. Instead of living in easy familiarity with their parents, the daughters of an English family of rank are confined in the school-room till an advanced period of girlhood ; then suddenly snatched from the seclusion where they have been devoting four hours per diem to music, and as many more to accomplishments equally superficial, and plunged into the bustle of society to steer their way as they may.

The moment of their introduction is intimated to the world by presentation at court ; after which, it is tacitly understood that

they are to get married as soon and as advantageously as they can. No more reserve, no modest silence, no diffident retirement! They are to dress, dance, sing, play, ride, chatter, with a view to the grand object of inducing some gentleman of a condition superior to their own to make an offer of his hand.

At their father's country-seat, they are at liberty to play billiards, stroll in the shrubberies, ride in green lanes, and join in tender duets with persons who were strangers to them the preceding week, and who entertain no more intention of becoming their husbands, than of suing for the hand of one of the Princesses of China. It may generally be observed, indeed, that the "agreeable young men," invited to assist in enlivening the dulness of an English country-house, are younger brothers, debarred by their social position from entering into the holy estate of matrimony.

Yet should the result of these strollings and duettings be a mutual attachment, the young people who have been flung into each other's arms, are reviled by their parents as

rebellious, presumptuous, unprincipled, and unfeeling. The young lady is made a mark for the scorn of her wiser sisters, and the sermons of the village pastor; while the young gentleman is dismissed the house as ignominiously as a footman detected in purloining the family plate.

In London, the young lady on her preferment is exposed to trials still more alarming. Every night she accompanies her lady-mamma to one or two brilliant assemblies or balls; and is under the necessity of dancing with any coxcomb presented to her by any lady of her acquaintance. Let it not be supposed that a *contredanse* or valse is the same silent ceremony as in Paris. During the dance, the gentleman is permitted, nay, *expected*, to pour into her ears a farrago of nonsense, known in society under the vague title of "flirting."—When it concludes, she accepts (not the hand, but) the *arm* of the enterprising stranger;—and, pressed to his side in the throng, proceeds to the refreshment-room, often on another floor; where, separated from her chaperon by a crowded staircase, she passes an hour in the

most familiar intercourse with one, whose conduct, station, and views, are perhaps wholly unknown to her family.

These hazards are nightly renewed for the space of three months. The favourite partner presents himself, after a slight introduction, as a morning visitor, and is probably received by the young ladies of the family.

Every day, in the public promenades of Hyde Park, men may be seen "flirting" with young ladies in familiar and disrespectful attitudes through carriage windows, the mammas (overcome by the fatigue of supervising the romping of the cotillon till six in the morning,) being asleep in the opposite corner.—At exhibitions, at *déjeuners*, at Greenwich parties, they become their escort, and grow familiar with them as their glove. Admitted to enjoy their society without reserve, they are not tempted to incur the hazard of matrimony, for the sake of obtaining their companionship. They wait, they deliberate, till a newer face attracts them elsewhere; and the same game is played over again, season after season, with *debutante* after *debutante*, creating in England

a race of discontented old maids and dissipated "men about town."

The father meanwhile, looks listlessly on, when the claims of clubs and divisions will permit. Should his lady wife acquaint him that "Sir Robert or Captain Brown is making up to Sophy," he invites Sir Robert or Captain Brown to dinner; and if after a season's dangling, the young gentleman does not propose, most likely asks him down to his country-seat for a week's shooting or hunting,—an archery-meeting, or a race-ball.

If even these baits fail to obtain a bite, some more promising pretendant is invited in Sir Robert's place. It is considered *infra dig.* to give him the slightest hint that his alliance would be agreeable to the family. It is thought more honourable to angle for him, to tickle the trout or attempt to entangle him by a bold cast of the matrimonial net, than to come honestly to the point, saying: "You seem to prefer my daughter. Your position in life satisfies the expectations of her family. Her fortune is so much. Is such a marriage likely to promote your happiness?"

After half a dozen successive seasons, the young lady on preferment becomes as accessible to the acquaintance of all sorts and conditions of men, as her lady mamma. You see her at Almack's shaking hands with five-and-twenty in succession; or nodding to them in the ring, as she ambles on horseback by the side of my lord her father, who is squabbling politics with some greybeard companion. She has little scruple in despatching notes to her male friends concerning the arrangement of a water-party, or the loan of a new work; to solicit their votes for a favourite candidate, or force them to buy tickets for the benefit of a favourite artist. Her face is as well known to the loungers in the Park as the statue of Achilles. She has been a fixture at the Opera, and Ancient Concerts, year after year. The charm of her countenance is familiar to every eye, the sallies of her gaiety to every ear.

Is such a girl likely to be sought as a timid bride,—as a pure being trembling to confide the secrets of her gentle mind even to him whom, at the altar, she has sworn to honour and obey?

Nevertheless, the force of habit so blinds the refined gentleman of the most refined nation of Europe to the coarseness of such practices, that they often seek in wedlock women of their own condition in life, whom, for ten previous years, they have seen exposed to the corrupting influence of all this publicity! The cruel prevalence of the law of primogeniture, by reducing daughters and younger sons to beggary in order to pamper the head of the family, often defers till a late period of life the independence which, obtained by professional exertions, enables the Englishman to support a wife. Many, under such circumstances, recur to the preferences or fulfil the engagements of former days. But these, and the damsels promoted by unusual attractions, or unusual good fortune to an early marriage with men of superior circumstances and merit, form happy exceptions. The abuses and miseries arising from so faulty a system are far more general.

In the first place, what greater calamity than what the parlance of the country intitles a love-match! Some soft-hearted girl of

seventeen, released after ten years' incarceration in the schoolroom, from Herz's exercises, backboards, boiled mutton, and rice pudding, is transplanted as if by magic, into her mother's brilliant drawing-room, the tables of which are covered with new novels and the sentimentality of Keepsakes and Books of Beauty, all intimating the omniscience and ecstasy of the tender passion.

At her first ball, she dances with a handsome cornet, the younger son of a younger brother, who falls in love with her ringlets and blonde lace, and whispers the secret in her ear, in the course of a week or two. At first, she treats the matter as a jest; but before the close of the season, he becomes so pressing, and has contrived to establish himself so familiarly in her father's house, that she considers it proper to disclose the matter to her parents. Mamma is in a state of frenzy. To think that her daughter should have been listening, night after night for months, to the protestations of a wretch—without a guinea in his pocket!

The young gentleman is warned off the

premises; while the young lady, instead of being praised for her discretion, is informed that the offence could not have occurred without encouragement on her part. Vexed with herself for not having frowned away the poor young man without exposing herself and him to such an *éclat*, she determines to be more cautious next time; and, accordingly, Lionel Percy, who succeeds the cornet as her escort in the Park and partner in the waltz, is allowed to make himself as agreeable as he pleases without a word of complaint to mamma, who has taken it into her head that Lionel, a man of first-rate connexions, must also be a man of fortune. At all events, it is a creditable thing for her daughter to have a partner at command so current in the fashionable circles; and Lionel and the young lady on her preferment are accordingly permitted to flirt through the season, till the young girl's affections become seriously engaged.

At length, she intitles her young admirer to make proposals, for her hand.

“Your fortune, sir?”—“Ten thousand pounds.”—“Your prospects?”—“A blank.”

Instead of granting his petition, papa shows him the door, forbids all correspondence with Miss Emily; and the young people who for months past have scarcely spent an hour apart, are condemned to see each other no more!

A letter is at length furtively addressed to poor Emily by her lover, and furtively answered. A discovery follows; and papa, who during the first five years of his marriage was a rigid locker up of his wife, now takes to locking up his daughter. Irritated rather than subdued by this violence, Emily contrives to receive further solicitations from one who, enamoured of her pretty face and knowing little of her temper and disposition, is eager only to show the old folks how little he values their authority.

They elope. The papers paragraph,—the parents are inconsolable,—the world laughs in its sleeve,—and Lionel Percy's club proclaims that he is a bold man.

The father, whose commands have been thus cruelly disobeyed, is of course justified in giving no fortune to his rebellious daughter. But Lionel has his ten thousand pounds,

or rather the four hundred pounds per annum, which he receives as interest for the same;—and is not an income of four hundred pounds per annum an ample competence for Love in a Cottage.

In such terms, at least, Emily writes to her young friends; whose answers to her letters, either through care for her pocket, which they will not attack by expense of postage, or because they fear that her poverty may become burthensome to themselves, wax few and far between.

Nevertheless she is not discouraged. Lionel, still the most adoring of men, takes care, (unshackled by a marriage settlement,) to supply from his principal all deficiencies of income, that the idol of his soul may continue to eat mutton-cutlets instead of mutton-chops, and enjoy the pony-chaise, (the legitimate car of Cupid whenever he assumes the character of Love in a Cottage.) It is not till four years of married life have enriched the Percys with two squalling children and the immediate prospect of a third, that Emily is reluctantly informed by her husband that their hitherto inadequate income

is diminished to two hundred and fifty pounds!

Love in a Cottage, now assumes the less euphonous denomination of Love in Lodgings. The pony-chaise is exchanged for an occasional hackney coach, the washing is done at home, the wages of the sulky maid-of-all-work are often in arrear. All the miseries of a necessitous household pour down upon the despairing couple.

Emily, hitherto a dawdle, is fretted into a scold; and Lionel, heretofore a blockhead, becomes a brute. The evils which would have been foreseen by French parents, ere they admitted a handsome young man to uncontrolled intimacy with their daughter, are fully realized; and poor Emily, worn down by privation and trouble, and discarded by her friends, droops in premature old age, and dies broken-hearted; accusing her own folly in place of the erroneous system which governs the conduct and mars the happiness of many a young lady on her preferment.

THE LENDING MAN.

"PROMOTION," we learn from irrefragable authority, "cometh neither from the East nor from the West, nor yet from the South:" nor yet (since the time when the great Lord North wielded his pen of office in Downing Street,) from the North.

Promotion, like a Will-o'-the-Wisp, whisks about hither and thither,—here to-day, and gone to-morrow,—no one knows why,—no other guesses wherefore. History heaps up her volumes on our shelves, to instruct us why people are born great. But by what magic people have greatness thrust upon them, or achieve greatness, is one of the grand mysteries of life. Bishops have been promoted to lawn sleeves for their dexterity in shuffling the cards at the royal rubber.

Welsh Baronets have been translated into Irish Peers, to silence their importunity for a key of the royal park. English Squires have been belorded and belauded for the judiciously-appropriated hospitalities of their country-seats. We have seen Mirtillo preferred to a secretaryship, not that his pen is that of a ready writer, but because, "upon my life, Mirtillo hath a very pretty wife!" It is impossible, in short, to determine by any vulgar form of augury, *which* of our sons may rise to be chief justice, which remain a briefless barrister. Hang over the cradles of your progeny as long as you will, and the wooden spoon or silver ladle which the wise women of Brentford pretend to be born in their mouths, is wholly and absolutely undiscoverable.

Ned Ormond was, in his school-days, an ugly dog, an ignorant dog, but a *knowing* dog. Every possible caninization was bestowed upon Ned, except that of being "a stupid hound!" He was "up to snuff," but always at the bottom of his class. Unhonoured by the birchhood of Harrow, Eton, or Westminster, it was his fate to be flogged

up the hill of learning along a less distinguished path. His short-sighted parents thought more of making Greek verses than English connexions; and at fourteen, he quitted his huge red-brick house of correction at Chiswick, knowing nothing—not even a lord.

Ned Ormond, however, who was an orphan, bullied his guardian into sending him to Cambridge. The expense of such a step was alarming, for his fortune amounted only to six thousand pounds; but Ned represented, and with *connaissance de cause*, that there was no getting on in life without a college education.

Old Russet, the guardian, who already, in his mind's eye, beheld his promising ward playing Paris in an academic gown, making option between the naked charms of "the three black graces, Law, Physic, and Divinity," confessed that there was some sense in the lad's assertion; and it was only when, after being rusticated for his irregularities, Ned Ormond escaped expulsion by prudently withdrawing his name from the university books, that the old gentleman repented his acquiescence.

"You are a ruined man!"—cried Russet in a fury.

"I am a made man!"—retorted Ned with perfect coolness.

"Your prospects are gone."

"My realities have commenced."

"Henceforward you will do nothing for yourself."

"It is a task I mean to leave to other people."

"You know nothing!"

"I know the world."

"I hoped you would become a steady young man!"

"I always intended to be a rising one."

"You have lost the three best years of your life."

"I have gained three hundred desirable acquaintances."

"You have thrown away your time and money."

"I have picked up time and money's worth."

"That remains to be proved!" quoth Russet.

"I wish you may live to see it!" was the

rejoinder of his hopeful ward;—and it was shortly after this colloquy between them, that Ned commenced his career as a man about town.

Meanwhile a certain cousin of his, Quintus Ormond by name, who had been educated at Edinburgh under the cross-grained vigilance of a crabbed uncle, with the view of working his way in the world, till at two and twenty, he quitted the university as promising a young sprig of a pedant as the heart of an uncle could desire, commenced his career of life at the same period with the dashing Ned, though in a very different sphere. Appointed as bear-leader to a young nobleman possessing immense patronage in the church, to preside over his lordship's travelling-morality, he was compelled to be, if not a field-preacher, at least a road-preacher, against the temptations of the world and the flesh; with a view of installing himself hereafter, preacher to the poor of his lordship's parish, against the temptations of the devil.

Tutor and pupil got on admirably together. His lordship's noble practice thrived under ignoble preaching. Whatever the

pedagogue interdicted, the pupil snatched to his bosom. Day after day was poor Quintus insulted, quizzed, hoaxed, and defied. There would have been no living through it at all, but for the living which lay, like a land of Canaan beyond the wilderness, at the end of the prospect. Aware that sufferance was the badge of all his tribe, he submitted without a murmur.

Three long years did Quintus pipe to the dancing of his lordly bear; in France, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Spain; now frozen to death, now stewed alive, now diluted with *soupe-maigre*, now stuffed like a turkey with truffles and morels; the fiercest extremes of weather and diet were inflicted without remorse upon the poor bear-led bear-leader of a tutor!

At length, as the period of his release was approaching, and convinced that in requital for the purgatory he had borne so patiently, his lordship could do no less than induct him into the Paradise of Granglebe, the noble tormentor was knocked on the head by the morning star of a Drontheim watchman! The application of poor Quintus for preferment

to the distant cousin succeeding to the earldom was answered by a haughty hint that he ought to have taken better care of his pupil; and that the family wished to hear no further mention of the name of Quintus Ormond.

A deeper humiliation than even this soon fell on his professional career. One day having been idle enough to attend a meeting of the Geographical Society, he was pitched upon by a gallant Captain Dareall, with whom he had made acquaintance at Malta, to accompany him in an expedition of African discovery. The meek forbearing countenance of the ill-requited tutor inspired him with interest. He swore that Quintus was the man for his money; promised that he should share his glory—share his gains; baptize the whole kingdom of Dahomey, throw down the idols of half a continent, and write a quarter of his own quarto.

The captain was a bold man. He talked with plausibility, and Quintus listened with enthusiasm. Having secured the necessary firmans, and a specific against the plague and cholera, they embarked with a cargo of blue

beads, tin-tacks, caoutchouc-sheets, oilsilk parasols, and a patent freezing-apparatus; and in the course of three years from their landing, confronted stripes, imprisonments, the cheating of consuls, and barbarity of beys, four fevers, two dysenteries, one *coup-de-soleil*, and a variety of cutaneous abominations, too tedious to enumerate; all the plagues of Pharaoh, and, in short, a hundred more.

Not, however, to dwell too painfully on the excruciations of the poor *savant*, suffice it, that he returned sole survivor of the expedition; having eaten the surgeon of the party baked in a Hottentot anthill, and leaving all that the musquitos had left of the gallant captain, inhumed in the sands of Willah-mallah-assiboo, two thousand miles beyond Timbuctoo! Nothing remained to Quintus on his arrival in town, but the ragged shirt whereon, with a pin and lampblack, he had inscribed the notes of his African discoveries; which, when transferred to hot-press, the world derided as lies and impositions. The frontispiece to his work, representing the favourite idol of the King of Da-

homy, a leading Review held up to shame, as a satire upon the Right Honourable Lady Helena Jobson.

As Quintus Ormond scudded along the by-ways of the metropolis, bearing his inky dishonours thick upon him, he was splashed by a fashionable cab, and hailed by its owner.

“Hallo! Quintus, my fine fellow!” cried a most dandified edition of his cousin Ned, “where have you been making it out for the last hundred years?—Can’t talk to you in this cursed place.—Get in. We’ve a couple of miles between this and Belgrave Square.”

The poor relation obeyed; and with the perspicuous brevity attained by having had to condense his tale of woe into one or more memorials to government, related his strange eventful history.

“Sad business indeed!” replied Ned, as they dashed along. “Cleaned out, turned out, kicked about the world, like fortune’s football.—But never mind!—The tables are turning!—*I’ll* see what I can do for you.—*I’ll* speak to the Board of Control.—*I’ll* mention you to the Colonial Office.—They’re

always wanting a Bishop for India, or a Governor for Sierra-Leone."

"Thankye, thankye!" cried Quintus, "I have had enough of elephantine climates, and should prefer the merest trifle at home. The romance of life is over. Mrs. Centlivre the dramatist, you know, who eloped with a poet at sixteen, espoused at six-and-thirty the head cook of Queen Anne!—Couldn't you recommend *me*, my dear Ned, as chaplain to the Lord Mayor?"

"To be sure I could; *my* interest is universal. You have no notion how I have got on in the world, since we parted."

"You have had an increase of fortune?"—

"Not a stuyver!"

"But how do you manage to keep up such appearances on an income of three hundred a year?"

"By living at the rate of three thousand."

"And running in debt?"

"Pho, pho, pho!"

"You *must* have taken up money?"

"Laid it down, you mean."

"You have positively borrowed nothing?"

“Not I! I knew better! *My* plan to get on in the world is by *lending*. I began, you know, with six thousand pounds. Four thousand are at this moment lodged in my banker’s hands, one thousand of which will be transferred to-morrow morning, to the account of my friend, the Duke of Outatellows, at Coutts’s, as I am now on my road to inform him.”

“And the remaining two thousand are lost to you for ever?”

“By no means! I have good security for every guinea; bills or I. O. U.’s from some of the first fellows in town. My popularity is immense. Every man of a certain standing knows me to have at my command a floating sum in ready money. It has been my fortune to save the credit of many a fine fellow, hard up after a heavy settling-day. It was I who helped young Sir Winham Scamp to carry off his heiress; it was I who lent old Harbottle the twenty-pound note with which he won his *quaterne* in the French lottery. I assisted Sir John to buy the winner of the St. Leger; I enabled Lord William to present that omnipotent pair of

diamond ear-rings to Zephyrine. In short, I am the universal friend in need. What follows? That I have dinner invitations for every day in the season, and half a dozen balls per night! I am on the list of four patronesses for Almack's; and it rains operatickets on my head. More haunches of venison cross my threshold than that of Birch; and I might stock the Clarendon and Albion with game. My library-table groans with annuals and presentation copies; my dinner-table with cards, far more to the purpose. So much for London! But when the country-season sets in, shew me the county in England in which I may not quarter myself for six weeks, in acceptance of pressing invitations!—Dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, lords, and commons, are my obligees; and, burning to throw off the obligation, load me with hospitalities. A single thousand pounds of mine once changed hands so many times in the course of a year, that I conceive it has ever since returned me, in value, an income of two hundred a year. No, no, my dear Quintus! talk no more of *borrowing* as a source of prosperity. Trust me,

that one of the best trades going in the fashionable world, is that of a judicious *lender*. Such is the charm which has made my ugly face beautiful in the eyes of society,—my pertness pass for wit,—my vulgarity for the frankness of a good fellow.—Don't offend Ned Ormond," they say, "he's such a devilish useful acquaintance." "Ormond is always ready at a pinch;" "Ormond's a friend in need."

Poor Quintus sighed a deep sigh in response, for they had just attained the lordly purlieus of Belgrave Square. In passing Tattersall's, he had seen the hands of half the sporting peerage kissed to Ned; and, in taking off the Stanhope angle of the park, perceived the hats of all the double-lacqued ladyship chariots doffed to his cab. Thanks to his notes, he had become a man of note; thanks to his guineas, he had won golden opinions from all sorts of men. A gold-beater could not have hammered out his substance to cover a greater extent of popularity; a wire-drawer could not have drawn out finer his means and appliances.

Instead of being worshipped, as was once the Golden Ball, he was worshipped as *three* golden balls. Nevertheless, the poor relation was ashamed of him. Quintus Ormond fancied that "Money Lent" was inscribed on the front of his cab; and murmuring between his teeth

Neither a borrower nor a lender be,

took leave of his thriving friend, and mounted cheerfully to his attic. He would have preferred even the renewal of his tropical pains and penalties to the flashy fashionability of the LENDING MAN.

THE ATTACHÉ.

EVERY condition of life commands its characteristic prospects. A Holborn tradesman, in thriving business, thinks to make his son a gentleman, by binding him apprentice to an apothecary or attorney; and a gentleman's servant, retired upon an annuity, tries to accomplish the same end, by procuring for *his* some petty government appointment, enabling him to devote his pen and ink to transcription of the nonsense [errors not excepted] of greater men. The butcher and the baker, or rather the butchers' and bakers' better halves, are chiefly ambitious of settling their offspring in "a *genteel* way of business," *i. e.* as drapers, haberdashers, or silk-mercens; while the artisan, the man whose brows are beaded with the sweat

of care, and whose cheeks hollowed with labour and famine, is satisfied that *his* children should be taught any trade insuring an honest livelihood—bricklayer, mason, carpenter, shoemaker,—what matters the *nature* of the toil which is to supply the joyless, hopeless, child of dust, with the scanty means of keeping that dust a few short years, and a few short feet, above the attainment of the worm!

There is still, however, a lower cellar below the sunken stories of the grand edifice of social life. There is the stage of pauperism, where parents behold their infant Helots dragged out of a workhouse-cradle, to labour at the perilous wheel of some unwholesome factory; or to ascend the noisome chimney, or dive into some still fouler recess—the cesspool or the sewer—to expiate the crime of having been forced into a world of want, where the choughs, and crows, and birds of prey that breed and build in the ancient towers bequeathed to us by the feudal system, still batten upon and engross the produce of the land.

But the higher classes do not the less enjoy their respective grades of parental

ambition. The county squire, rich in a handful of county votes, despatches his squireling to a neighbouring grammar-school; while his younger sons migrate to Eton and Oxford, that they may "become" dead-shots at "yellow-hammers," or accomplished tuft-hunters; in the view of forming good connexions, and securing future preferment.

The scientific man expatriates *his* youngsters to Göttingen, Leipsic, or Jena, in the hope that, by devoting themselves to the study of things which few men understand, they may eventually discover something which nobody knows; while the professional men "chop and change hands;" the physician choosing his son to be a lawyer, that he may hereafter grace his name with the initials M. and P.; and the lawyer making *his* cub a parson, to attain the glories of M. and A.

Even peers of the realm are occasionally much distracted by the necessity of chalking out a line of march for their successors. The lordling, or heir apparent, is of course, destined to that busiest of all idleness, the task of becoming master of a great estate,

and the distributor of an overflowing revenue. *His* education is accordingly pronounced to be a matter of secondary import. His little lordship may be as idle and ignorant as he pleases, for "he has not his way to make in the world." He has only to lend his aid to the facture of laws involving the rights and liberties of millions of his fellow-subjects; he has only to preside over the monopoly of thousands of acres of the earth's surface, nay of its subficial productions, so as to render available, or unavailable, to the service of mankind, the mighty treasures laid up unbounded and unboundable within the teeming womb of Nature; and it is therefore obviously sufficient for the enlightenment of *his* lordly mind, that he should understand the points of a hunter,—be versed in Newmarket pedigrees—the comparative reputation of the tailors, most in vogue, and—the comparative want of reputation of the *premières danseuses de l'opéra*.—What need he know more?—Is he not the chartered inheritor of eighty thousand per annum?—

The younger cock-chickens of the brood,

meanwhile, exercise the solitudes of the parent-fowl. If there be a fat living in the family, Jack—the honourable and brainless Jack,—must be brought up to the church; to absorb the preferment bequeathed by his ancestors, and pretend to the future honours of the silk apron and shovel hat. Tom—the curly-pated one, his lady-mother's darling—is marked out for the eider-down heroism of the household brigade, to become a lieutenant-colonel at eight-and-twenty, and die in his bed at a good old age; having figured at his two thousand levees, in the starry honours of his two hundred military orders, (standing orders, not fighting orders;) and derived a government income of some thousands per annum from a regiment, the very facings of which are unknown to him by sight, and the governorship of some castle, garrisoned by the bats, or Martello Tower falling into ruins.——

To Arthur, the third son, is assigned the Janus career of diplomacy! Arthur, who, having been marked out in his infancy to become a great man, was inducted into his calling in one of those lordly preparatory

schools in the regal atmosphere of Brighton, the diminutive shanks of whose aristocratic pupils used to be paraded in precocious silk-stockings at Pavilion balls. To this end, the little honourable acquired, under the tutorage of Madame Michau, the elements of the polite art of bowing, and was taught to figure in a quadrille, instead of a cyphering book ; till at length, having overtopped the other weeds of the rank soil, and grown too gawky for juvenile ball-rooms, Arthur was sent abroad for the completion of his education, lest by any chance he should stumble into something approaching to useful knowledge, in one of the classical academies of Great Britain.

At Caen, or Blois, or Tours, he may acquire the mother tongue of diplomacy at a sufficient distance from the corruptions of the French metropolis. But at Caen, Blois, or Tours, he falls in love with the "one fair daughter" of the *coëffeur* to the theatre, or allows the *Sous préfet's* wife to fall in love with *him*. The increase and acceleration of the young gentleman's bills upon his father's banker, apprize the noble Earl of the fact ;

whereupon, Arthur is packed off to Saxonize at Weimar, and imbibe a sufficient portion of High Dutch to qualify him for a wishy-washy translation of some well-known play. "Clavigo, translated from the German of Goethe, by the Hon. Arthur Gammonborough. John Murray, Albemarle Street."

From Weimar, he proceeds to smoke away a year at Göttingen, to study jurisprudence, meerschaums, and sauer kraut. But ere the twelvemonth elapses, a vacancy in the Foreign Office summons the future Metternich to Downing Street; and after a sinful fortnight at Paris, where it is indispensable that Staub should take his measure, and the *Cercle des étrangers* his bills, he tears himself away from the smiles of a tenth-rate figurante of the *Académie Royale*, or the Siddons of the *Ambigu Comique*, to resign himself to the labour of shifting Brahmah's quills into his penholder of enamel and gold, and spelling through the *Times* and *Chronicle* four hours per diem, for the good of the nation.—*Le voilà lancé!*—"My son Arthur" is now a diplomatist!

But whereas, within the mysterious re-

cesses of Downing Street, there abide certain superannuated clerks, grey-headed, gander-feathered goslings, penned up within its fence of pens and ink, in order to lead forth successive broods in the way they should go, a few months suffice the Honourable Arthur to accomplish himself in the mysteries of the Despatch Box. Within half a year of his arrival in England, he receives his first appointment as *attaché* ; an appointment demanding an allowance of five hundred a-year from his father, to enable him to hold it like a gentleman. *Attachéship* is, in fact, too onerous a calling for any man to adopt, who has not money enough at his disposal to admit of his dispensing with every higher qualification, as well as interest enough to secure him an eventual reward for his protracted task of doing nothing for nothing.

But what a difference between the "Honourable Arthur, *attaché à l'Ambassade de S. M. Britannique*," and the Honourable Arthur, younger son of the Earl of Gammonborough ! From the moment of his presentation at a Foreign Court in diplomatic uniform, the beardless boy becomes a per-

sonage; a personage invited to the entertainments of the corps diplomatique, and native noblesse;—privileged to dance with the established beauties of the court he diplomatizes, to hold its chamberlains by the button, and whisper in corners with the favourite Sultana of his Majesty or his Highness.

The saucy little manikin is the dispenser of a thousand privileges; the confidential agent of a thousand correspondences “per bag;” can appease Madame la Comtesse’s resentment, by forwarding, among the ministerial despatches, half a dozen pair of satin shoes, or a Brussels lace dress; and protect the weak side of our international interests by smuggling into the parish of St. James’s, the newest editions of Madame Sand’s last novel, or a *déjeuner* of Dresden China. Courteous as a prince of the blood to every usher of the backstairs, the *attaché* rarely steps into the seven-leagued boots of his dignity, unless to insult some quizzical-looking fellow-countryman in a seedy coat, who is slow to comprehend the mysteries of a passport.

To such a miscreant, indeed, the Jack-in-office readily assumes the official bully; exclaiming, "Do you suppose I am here, sir, to instruct you in the laws and customs of the country you are traversing? The British Government concedes a passport to every Englishman travelling on the continent. This, it is my business to deliver to you. But I must beg to decline being troubled with your inferences or inquiries."

Meanwhile, should any serious negotiation take place, (when ex-official commissioners, having the right use of their pens and understandings, are furnished *par extraordinaire* by the Cabinet at home,) the *attaché*, compelled, perhaps for the first time, to perform an honest day's work in his Majesty's service, throws down his pen in disgust, and swears like a ticket porter at the officiousness of the troublesome fools appointed by ministers to build up the breaches of national alliance, occasioned by the stupid negligence of the right honourable corps diplomatique of which he forms a part. He cannot overcome his indignation and astonishment at having something to do.

Should the party of his lordly sire go prematurely out of office, the *attaché* will find himself translated from the gay Courts of France, Berlin, Naples, St. Petersburg, or Madrid, to some duodecimo capital,—Stuttgart, Berne, Turin, or (darker and darker still) to Washington, or Rio Janeiro; when he must either resign himself to his fate, or resign his calling. But should his people still continue the chosen people of the King, or his elder brother become a Lord of the Treasury, or one of his sisters give her hand to the Premier's brother, the Honourable Arthur is anon promoted to *paid* attachéship, and receives five hundred per annum for the arduous duties of airing the lap-dogs of the Ambassadors,—taking care that her Excellency's schoolboy cubs are not run away with by their ponies during the vacation; cutting the leaves of the new pamphlets his Excellency receives from England; and seeing that their Excellences' carriage arrives to an appointed second after the Opera.

It is true the honourable attaché enjoys the sweets as well as sour of office, and

acquires a degree of importance, otherwise unattainable by his shallow capacities, by his supposed admission behind the scenes of the great political stage, no less than by playing jackal to the great lions of the State.

Unhappily for Arthur, our hero, his honourable stature happens to be of unheroic dimensions. His air is as unimposing as his intellect. Had he turned out a fine dignified-looking fellow, calculated to do honour to the blue riband, and figure with advantage among the great representatives of the Great Powers, at thirty he might hope to find himself "Sir Arthur Gammonborough, Secretary of Legation;" at forty, (provided some Queen of France, of Spain, or Empress of Russia or Austria, were young, fair, and discriminating,) "Lord Gammonwell of Gammonwell," and an Excellency; at fifty, "The Right Honourable the Earl of Gammonwell, K.G.;" and at sixty, "Marquis of Gammonwell, Ambassador Extraordinary,—Gartered, *Toison-d'or-ed*, *St. Esprit-ed*, *St. Ferdinanded*, *St. Anned*, *St. Waldimired*, *St. Michael*ed, and

St. Georged," and all the rest of it; with a salary of twelve thousand per annum, a palace, and a service of gold plate, to afford two dinners per week to travelling Earls and dilettante Countesses;—an object of wonderment to the Minister of the United States, working hard for his country on a stipend of as many hundreds and a crate of crockery; and of envy to the honourable attachés sprouting up under cover of his branches;—diplomatists in their teens, whose career is still before them. Whereas the Arthur of whom we write, remains—and is likely to remain—AN ATTACHÉ.

THE CONSULTING PHYSICIAN.

“I TRUST I have the honour of seeing your Ladyship well this morning, and that Lord Casserole has passed a tolerable night?” minces the fashionable apothecary, spruce Mr. Camomile, gliding with well-practised and noiseless steps over the muffled carpet of Lady Casserole’s drawing-room in Carlton Terrace; casting a significant glance towards the golden pendule on the chimney-piece, to mark the consciousness of being within five-eighths of a second of the minute of his appointment, which he could not presume to express.

“A *tolerable* night?” cries Lady Casserole, with indignation. “Brown assures me that he did not sleep a wink!—Since that last prescription of Sir Jacob’s, he has in fact

been going on progressively from bad to worse,—restless, nervous, without appetite, and without ease.”

Camomile knits his brows into sympathy, and shakes his head, as if it had contained one of his own draughts.

“In short, unless Sir Jacob Gemini, and Sir Richard Colchicum, can hit upon something new for him this morning, I must begin to think of calling in farther advice.”

“Your Ladyship cannot be too much on the alert,” insinuates the gentle Camomile, well aware that every change of men necessitating a change of measures, is for the advantage of his annual account; that a sudden transition from Belladonna and leeches, to quinine and pitch plasters, will be at least a couple of guineas in favour of his bill.

“There is a Dr. Smith, of whom my friend, the Duchess, has been telling me wonders?”

“A—— Dr.—— Smith?” hesitates the fashionable apothecary.

“Dr. Hamilton Smith.”

“Dr. Hamilton Smith?—Exactly!—A

highly respectable man,—lives in George Street, Hanover Square, and drives a pair of handsome bays,—with a theory of his own upon digestion. He has written a pamphlet or two.—A highly respectable practitioner.”

“Dr. Smith attends Lord Dansden’s family, and the Lambtons, and Grévilles; in short, he is very highly spoken of. Supposing we call him in?”

“Why, really,—but here is Sir Richard Colchicum’s carriage,” ejaculates the apothecary, brightening. “Most punctual man, Sir Richard Colchicum!—Just as the clock is striking!—No one with whom I like better to attend, than Sir Richard Colchicum!—Good morning, Sir Richard, good morning!”—

“Good morning!—Your Ladyship’s most obedient.—What news to-day of my patient?”—

“Nothing can be worse!—Lord Casserole neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps,” replies her Ladyship drily.

“Pulse low,—appetite failing,” appends Camomile.

“Quite right.—Just as we expected,”—

cries Sir Richard ; “ the effect of the last change of medicines. His Lordship is going on as well as possible. We don’t want him to eat,—we don’t want him to drink,—we don’t want him to sleep.—We only want him to recover.”

“ But when I tell you, Sir Richard,” ——

“ Tell me nothing, Madam, tell me nothing ! Sir Jacob will be here in a minute ; (just struck two by St. James’s !) and then, with your leave, we will visit our patient.”

“ But it is necessary you should know, Sir Richard,” ——

“ All that is necessary for me to know, Madam, I can inquire of Lord Casserole’s own man. Brown is always on the spot ; and —— Very strange that Sir Jacob don’t make his appearance.”

“ Sir Jacob has just now a very arduous attendance on Lady Jemima Lullaby, insinuates Camomile. “ She has several sick children ; and will scarcely let our friend escape out of her nursery.”

“ Then he shouldn’t make appointments in other people’s drawing-rooms. I must be in the Regent’s Park by half after two.”

"Then do you *really* think, Sir Richard, that I need undergo no immediate uneasiness on Lord Casserole's account? I should be sorry, you know, that people had reason to *talk* of my being seen every night at balls, or the Opera, if there were any immediate danger."

"Go where you like, ma'am. What good could you do by staying at home? Lord Casserole appears accustomed to the services of his own man."

"And Brown is such a kind attentive creature!"

"I would as soon have Brown sitting up with his Lordship, as sit up with him myself!" cries Camomile enthusiastically.

"Very strange that Sir Jacob can't keep his time!" cries Sir Richard, dragging out something resembling a clock, by something resembling a drag-chain. "I must be off in ten minutes."

"I see by this morning's papers that the Duke of Lancashire is suffering from a slight catarrh; and Sir Jacob is probably detained at Lancashire House," interposes the benignant Camomile.

"Then, with your leave, Mr. Camomile, we will proceed at once to Lord Casserole's room, for my time is precious," growls Colchicum.

"Certainly, certainly, Sir Richard. And whatever instructions you may think proper to leave, I shall be most happy to stay and report to Sir Jacob.—Ha! I think I hear a carriage?"

"It has stopped next door, at the General's. Sir Jacob is always *so* late!" cries Lady Casserole peevishly. "Really these Consultation-days make me quite nervous!"

"Ah! there he is at last!" ejaculates Camomile. "I know his footman's knock."

"If *my* fellow were to make half as much noise, I would knock him down," says Colchicum. "My rule is, When you see straw in the street, ring!"

"An excellent regulation."

"Can't conceive how it can take a man all this time to make his way up one pair of stairs!—I must be off in five minutes."

"My dear Sir, we must make allowances! Our friend Sir Jacob is not *quite* so young as he was," insinuates Camomile, with a knowing smile.

“ Sir Jacob Gemini !” announces the solemn butler, while a gorgeous footman throws open the door ; and in glides, with serpent-like sinuosity, the most courtly of modern leeches.

“ Ten thousand, thousand pardons, my dear Lady Casserole ! I must throw myself upon your Ladyship’s forbearance, though I have actually been forced to tear away a button in escaping from the Duke of Lancashire, in order to keep my appointment here. Your Ladyship knows his Grace’s little foible ? Quite impossible to get off, when once he fastens himself upon you ! Sir Richard, *your* kindness will, I am sure, excuse me.—Camomile, my good fellow, how are we going on up stairs ?—How does poor dear Lord Casserole find himself, since I had last the pleasure of meeting you here ?”

“ Why, I fear, not quite so well.”

“ Ah ! just what I was anticipating with Lady Jemima Lullaby ; who, I do assure you, my dear Lady Casserole, takes the warmest interest in his Lordship’s melancholy position. Not a day passes that she does not say to me, ‘ My dear Sir Jacob, what is your

real opinion of poor dear Lord Casserole!—Do you think him likely to go off suddenly, or not?”

“Lord Casserole eats very little, and scarcely sleeps at all,” observes the disconsolate lady.

“Exactly the condition of our poor friend the Dowager Lady Bronchia,” says Sir Jacob in a confidential aside to Camomile; turning round to Lady Casserole to add, “Her ladyship has swallowed only half a Naples biscuit soaked in punch jelly, since Sunday morning: and her companion, Miss Twaddle, assured me, last night, that they had not been able to get the old lady to sleep, although she had read through to her, twice over, the whole last number of the Westminster Review. *Poor soul!*”

“Supposing we go up to Lord Casserole;—I must be off in a minute,” growls Sir Richard Colchicum.

“With all my heart!—Lady Casserole will, perhaps, do us the honour to accompany us.—If *any* thing could tend to animate the spirits of our poor patient, it would doubtless be a visit from her Ladyship! Must I show

you the way, Sir Richard?—Camomile, my good fellow, pray precede us, that we may not break in unannounced. Ha ! little Fido, —good dog,—down Fido,—down, Sir ! The handsomest spaniel in London ;—a King Charles, of course ? Lady Casserole, pray allow me to congratulate you, *en passant*, on this little bit of Dresden. Quite a *bijou* !—Rittener's, I presume ?—Charming staircase ! The Carlton Terrace houses boast the easiest staircases in town—and *such* a view ! Sir Richard, have you ever noticed the Surrey hills from that window ?—Camomile, may we come in ?”

“ Well, Mr. Brown, how is Lord Casserole to-day ?” inquires Sir Richard.

“ Bad as he can be, Sir ; has not opened his lips these fourteen hours.”—

“ Will your Lordship give me leave to feel your pulse ?” says Sir Jacob, extending his own hand with amenity, and taking out a Breguet watch at the same moment.

“ The Doctor is asking you, my Lord, to put out your arm,” whispers Brown to the sick man.

“ Ugh ! ugh ! ough ! ough ! ough !”

"My Lord don't seem to have much sense of what is going on," rejoins Mr. Brown, much affected.

"Never mind,—don't disturb him," says Sir Richard.

"Is your Lordship aware of any change of symptoms?" mildly expostulates Sir Jacob, speaking in the patient's ear.

"Ough! ough! ugh! ugh! ugh!" gasps the sufferer.

"Ah! I see exactly. His Lordship's articulation is bad. But his skin is much more moist, and his complexion brighter. He is going on better than I had anticipated."

"Going *on*?—going *off*!"—murmurs poor Brown, as the scientific phalanx follows Lady Casserole out of the sick man's chamber. "Thank God, I shall never be great or rich enough to be cursed with the attendance of a grand physician!"—

"You will find paper, and a standish, Sir Jacob, on the writing-table in the back drawing-room," says Lady Casserole, in a tone of plaintive sentimentality, after having escorted down stairs the three gentlemen in black.—"I am sure poor Lord Casserole's

case will receive every attention at your hands."

"My dear Madam, you must not allow yourself to despond," whispers Sir Jacob in her Ladyship's ear, as he bows her out of the room; pressing her hand at the door, to enable her to deposit in his own a two guinea fee, in its wrapper of silver paper. — "Rely upon our giving his Lordship's state our most deliberate investigation."

Out sails Lady Casserole. The door closes gently after her. — And lo, the consultation commences.

"I have not seen you this age, my dear Colchicum!" cries Sir Jacob, in an altered voice. "What have you been about?"—

"Spending Easter, at my place in Buckinghamshire."—

"And what did you do with His Royal Highness?"—

"Persuaded him he was well, and did not want me."—

"And with Lord Flamborough?"—

"Died last week."

"And the rest of your patients?"—

"Made them over to Camomile here;

who gave me plenty to do on my return. —
Eh ! Camomile ?—Ha ! ha ! ha !—”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ”

“ And how are the birds this season ? ”

“ Most abundant.—That week’s hard rain in the month of March, did considerable harm in the low-lying lands ; but my preserves are in capital order.”

“ Would you like the shooting over the Duke of Lancashire’s farms ?—I am sure he would give you the deputation. Shall I ask him ? ”—

“ Thank you.”

“ Anything doing in the House last night ? ”—

“ Nothing particular, — only the leather tax. Sir Semi Colon made a tolerable speech.”—

“ That man is getting on. I am confidentially assured that the Queen thinks very well of him.”

“ By the way, what is his story about Sir Robert ?—is he to get his peerage ? They say his wife has been interfering. — Women, —always women ! ”

"Always women!—So Lady Sanctify is gone off at last!"

"Lady Sanctify! with whom?—One of her pet saints of the Lock Chapel?"—

"By no means,—a Cornet in the Tenth!—a lad of eighteen!"—

"I must not forget to tell *that* to Lady Rollick. It will do her more good than all my prescriptions.—Do you dine at the Club to-morrow?"—

"No. I can't stand Willis's wine.—I dine with a turtle party at Bleaden's."—

"Nothing like Bleaden's lime-punch, Sir Jacob, eh?"—

"Ay, ay, when one has no patients but Dowagers to see after dinner, my dear Camomile."

"Or when one is sure of one's dear Camomile to supply one's place, eh! Gemini?"—

"For my part the last time I dined at the Club"——

"I trust, gentlemen, I find your opinion tolerably favourable?" sighs Lady Casserole, gently opening the drawing-room door, and advancing towards the gloomy group beside the fire-place.

"No cause for despondency that I can discover," cries Sir Richard, with admirable presence of mind.

"After the maturest deliberation," adds Sir Jacob, "we see no motive for any immediate change of medicine. My friend Sir Richard Colchicum and myself have decided that it will perhaps be as well to strengthen his Lordship's diet of chicken broth, with an occasional cup of beef tea; and every second night, previous to his Lordship's night-draught, an almond poultice must be administered about the region of the chest,—an almond poultice, my dear madam, softened with rose water; (Mr. Camomile has promised to be so obliging as to attend and see it properly disposed of;) and on Thursday next, with your Ladyship's permission, at the same hour, we shall have the honour of meeting here, to look in upon his Lordship again. I have the honour, my dear Lady Casserole, to wish you a good morning."

"Lady Casserole, madam, good morning."

"Your Ladyship's most obedient," added the several leeches, each pocketing his fee.

“I won’t send to Dr. Hamilton Smith till after Thursday: this poultice may perhaps do wonders!” muses the Viscountess, as their carriages roll from the door.

And the poultice did wonders. There was no farther occasion for change of drugs or change of doctors. The *Morning Post* duly announced in its obituary—“Died on Thursday morning last, after a lingering illness, at his house in Carlton Terrace, the Right Honourable Viscount Casserole, deeply lamented by his family and friends.”

Not a word of the obligations conferred on the afflicted family by the ministry of the Consulting Physicians.

THE OPTIMIST AND THE PESSIMIST.

It is an inconvenient thing for one whose inertness is willing to follow the example of the chameleon, and take the colour of the nearest object, to be surrounded by persons extreme in their opinions, or exaggerated in their qualities. I am unfortunate in having two intimate friends of natures so opposite, that, were I to vary the tenor of my principles five hundred times a day, it would be impossible to harmonize with their alternate vagaries. Sir Josiah Crabbe is a gentleman grievously disposed to look upon the dark side of the things of this world. The spectacles through which he scrutinizes mankind and their doings, are of a dingy blue; and his axiom of *nil admirari* is so absolute,

that I doubt whether the word "Good" ever issued, in an approbative sense, from his lips.

My friend Joe Ramble, on the other hand, is one of those provokingly good-humoured rattles, whose high spirits put them in conceit with even things that ought to challenge criticism. The eye of poor Joe is not of that "curious" kind which delights to "quote deformity." He has an intuitive faculty for walking on the sunny side of the highways and byways of life. Everything seems to smile upon him, or rather *he* seems to smile upon every thing he approaches. He cannot be made to believe that matters, public or private, ever go amiss. The throne, the government, the country—all are unexceptionable. He will not even have the weather abused in his hearing—the weather, that chartered scapegoat of English ill-humour! If the harvest be a bad one so much the better for the farmers; if a good one so much the better for the public. When Ireland is reported to be in a state of tranquillity he thanks god that her prospects are mending; when in a state of rebellion he is delighted—

for what chance of recovering her rights without a little stir? On Queen Victoria's accession, he threw up his hat some five feet higher than other people—"A female reign!—a reign rivalling the glories of the days of Queen Bess and Queen Anne," was all that had been wanting to complete the civilization of the kingdom, and the foreign triumphs of the British empire; and the moment the Queen's marriage was announced he rejoiced that the sceptre was to be held, partnerwise, by one of the firmer sex.

Ramble is, in short, the most contented man alive. National, even to bigotry, he is persuaded that England is not only the greatest country in the world, but that, were all other countries to league against her, as against Napoleon, they would lose their time and trouble. Unconquerable, insubmergeable, she would still remain

Unhurt amid the war of elements,

The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.

I can encounter these two friends singly, whether as friends or antagonists. By humouring their vagaries, I keep them on good terms with themselves, and, consequent-

ly with me. But when any unlucky circumstance brings them into collision within the limits of my Diogenic tub, then comes the tug of war—and such a tug! Crabbe is loud and fractious; Ramble persevering and aggravating; and, as the bleat of a lamb will provoke an irritable dog to keep up his barking, Ramble's slight monosyllables have often the effect of worrying his adversary out of all Christian patience.

The other morning, Sir Jos. was sitting with me in one of his ultra-acrimonious dispositions; railing against everything in the material or immaterial world—the affairs of the East, the affairs of the West—the cabinet, the army, the navy, and all other professional and corporate bodies whose healths are drunk at public dinners.

I allowed the storm to roar itself still. Since it pleased him to assert that the times were out of joint, and since I felt unconscious of any power to mend them, I put on a look of sympathy, and was mum; wondering why people should agitate their minds about the East or the West, so long as all is right in the first degree of longitude;

and when Crabbe inquired with a grave face, on entering the room, "How matters were going on in Egypt?" would fain have answered, (had he not looked so plaguy cross,) that I understood "the pyramids were as well as could be expected."

I kept silence, however, from the foolish words that tempted me; and submitted to be assured that England was on the point of losing her most important alliances, her most valuable colonies, her financial reputation; that Britannia was now a lady of anything but unsullied reputation; that America had ceased to visit her, and Europe was cutting her acquaintance: and tried to preserve a becoming elongation of countenance, when every minute, like the toll of a funeral bell, Sir Josiah emitted some dolorous announcement. When, lo! just as I was beginning to feel as though a parish pall hung heavy upon my shoulders, in bounced my friend Ramble, his mottled cheeks distended by a smile, and his white teeth glistening like those of a hungry pointer.

"Just arrived in England, my dear boy!" cried he; "only three hours landed at the

Tower stairs!"—Sir Josiah (who seemed to resent his intrusion in such towering spirits, as a personal offence) looked as if he longed to inquire whether poor Joe had travelled on the broad grin all the way from France.

"*Here's* comfort!" resumed Ramble, rolling forward to the fireside the arm-chair in which he ensconced himself, to the discomposure of my previous guest. "*Here's* what enables one to defy winter, death, or the doctors!—A good sea-coal fire—a glorious English fireside!"—

"I have always understood, sir," replied Crabbe—to whom he seemed to be addressing himself for confirmation—"that there was nothing more unwholesome on earth than a sea-coal fire. To say nothing of the cursed sulphur which turns everything black in the room, (even one's temper,) to say nothing of the filthy gases emitted, of which, not being a chemist, I am incompetent to speak, (and I wish I were also incompetent to smell,) there can be no doubt that innumerable lives are annually sacrificed in England to our mad habit of roasting ourselves half the morning before the bars of a grate, as a preparative

for confronting the severity of the most infernal climate on the face of the habitable globe."

"Climate, my dear sir?" cried Ramble—"Climate? Don't talk to me about the merit of foreign climates!—I've just come from Nice, where I was shrivelled up like a dead leaf with the *bise*. I spent the spring in Constantinople, where it snowed half the time and rained t'other; and I am now enabled to assert from experience, what I have often heard advanced by travelled men, that England has the best, that is, the most enjoyable climate, in the universal world. You are neither scorched and dried up, as in the south, nor mildewed as in the north—nor"——

Crabbe, who had been shrugging his shoulders impatiently for some moments, now burst out with—"There is some difference between being roasted to rags, sir, and not warmed through!—The question of the English climate is sufficiently set at rest by the masses of green fruit one sees piled in our markets, in our streets, at our very tables—an effectual check against undue increase of

population!—It sets one's teeth on edge to think of it!"

"Well, well, so long as our harvests are abundant we may dispense with a few apples and pears!"—cried Ramble. • "And nature has, at least, provided us with the means of bidding defiance to the weather. Look at this admirable fire," cried he, starting up, and placing himself before it, in precisely such an attitude as to prevent our complying with his request. "I look upon an Englishman's hearth as the palladium of national glory. I look upon our firesides as the instigators of our domestic happiness,—as the reward of our domestic virtues!"

"And I," cried Crabbe, whose temper, albeit the glowing grate was in eclipse, was rising to fever heat—"I look upon an English fireside as the bane of all national prosperity,—as the clog upon all national progress,—as the screen of our inertness,—the pretext for our incapacity,—the hot-bed of our selfishness, vulgarity, and pride. The pretended comfort of our fireside is the motive adduced for closing ourselves up, evening after evening, within our own doors, to

the extinction of all social intercourse; and, consequently to the suppression of all the more expansive impulses of the human soul. While other civilized nations delight in the intercommunication which forwards the interests of the arts, the sciences, the public weal, an Englishman holds it a certificate of merit that, after muddling his brains with heady port, he can potter away his evening over the fire, muddling his affections with the twaddle of his wife and daughters, as they yawn over their carpet work or sewing.—What effort does such a man make, sir, to improve their understanding or his own?”—

“I don’t see why he should not make an effort,” remonstrated Ramble. “He might read aloud instructive books.”

“Ay, and put them to sleep before bedtime,”—interrupted Crabbe crabbedly.

“He might direct the conversation to subjects of popular interest.”

“Which the misses would cut short by talking of cruets, lambswool, and a new stitch, whereas, were it not for the attraction of that accursed fireside, over which he has coddled himself from his boyhood till he has

secured a rheumatism from every casual encounter of the night air, he would take his young people into the society of those of their own age, to the improvement of their spirits and intellects, and the encouragement of those friendships and connections which are to cheer their after progress through life. An Englishman does little or nothing for the cultivation of acquaintanceship. He thinks it enough, for the happiness of his family, that he cherishes one or two old bores of friends, who entertain, word for word, and blunder for blunder, the same opinions as himself. It is his favourite boast that he don't care about the world. He swears, on every fresh invitation, that he hates large parties ; which being interpreted, means that he is snugger in his own home, where he can engross the whole fireside, and lay down the law, than in a more extended circle, where he must share with other people his consequence and right of shin-broiling."

" Well, I must still confess myself, on that point, a John Bull," cried Ramble, shaking up his feathers, and looking as if he had said a fine thing, and was proud of himself.

“ Nobody doubts you, sir ; and you are in the majority—you are decidedly in the majority ! ” cried Sir Jos. “ For my part, I wish to interfere with no man’s pleasures or pursuits. I only permit myself to despise them ! ”

“ I fancy I shall have most people on my side, when I say, that a good fire on a winter’s evening is not so very despicable ! ”—cried Ramble, rubbing his hands, with a chuckle. “ A commodious drawing-room, with an Axminster carpet, well-lined curtains, closely drawn in the rear,—on one side a smoking tea-table, on the other a handsome sprightly woman, and in front a fine, clear, bright, glowing fire of Newcastle coal, constitutes my notion of comfort; and I challenge life to produce anything tending more completely to the promotion of human happiness ! ”

Poor Joe now looked so provokingly triumphant, that Sir Josiah could scarcely contain himself.

“ A pretty description,” cried he, “ of the English Garden of Eden ;—of the paradise of northern imaginations !—Instead of seek-

ing the interchange of mind enjoyable in a large assemblage of rational beings, the Englishman makes it an article of religion to lose himself in inglorious sensuality. With us selfishness is amplified into a partnership concern. What is called the domestic happiness of England, is only a more refined system of double-bodied egotism.”—

“Every country has its customs,” argued Ramble, undiscouraged. “The English are not a gregarious people. In Italy, society is held together by the bond of music—an orchestra or a chorus being a pretext for association. But I don’t know that either the minds or morals of the Italians are much indebted to the Opera. In France politics and the theatres tend also to the creation of masses. People meet at cafés to read the newspapers, or seek excitement in the throng of theatres; but, in every instance, this results from the absence of domestic affections, or the want of domestic comforts. The marriage of a foreigner has been the effect of a family engagement, not of preference, not of attachment; and, as to his home, with draughts of air streaming through every door

and window, and a couple of smouldering logs substituted for a fine glowing mass of ignited matter that sends warmth into the depths of one's heart and evokes all the kindlier feelings of humanity,—what has it to boast that need detain him from the chattering mob of assemblies, or the false glare of a theatre ?”—

“Nothing, certainly!—And the consequence is, that he has become more intelligent, more refined, more independent, than ourselves. Which capital, pray, is progressing most rapidly? London, Edinburgh, Dublin or Paris?—Which nation has effected most in self-enfranchisement within the last ten years?—The English or the French?—Where are the arts most cultivated?—Where are the sciences most encouraged?—Whence do we borrow our elegant inventions—our lessons of taste—the tone of our public amusements—the mode of all we eat, wear, sing, dance, or assume in the way of personal or social embellishments?—From the Continent, sir!—from the Continent, which is not too much engrossed in warming its shins to neglect its powers of invention. From the Continent,

which, as it does not station itself with its coat-flaps in its hands before the fireplace, in the most indecent attitude ever imagined by the sensuality of mankind, is not brutalized out of all refinement of soul, or elegance of manners! Because we have accustomed our cuticles to this unnatural vitrification, are the great bonds of society, pray, to be loosed? Is there to be none of that expanded fellowship of intellect from whence arises the great regeneration of the species,—the grand elevation of national motives,—the cheering prospect of national glory? Rather let the wisdom of Parliament buy up the infernal reserves of Staffordshire and Newcastle, and freeze us into the necessity of congregating together for the sake of bodily warmth!”—

“Upon my life, I can’t conceive what we want more, in the way of association, than we now enjoy!” cried Ramble. “Those who are engaged in professions pass their mornings in social communication.”

“For the despatch of business!—An Englishman will do anything for the good of the shop.”

“Of an evening, Parliament brings toge-

ther nightly, eight months of the year, a vast proportion of the most intelligent of the community."

"Still, for what *they* pretend to call despatch of business—that is, for the purpose of talking about despatching it."

"The Clubs then?—look at the Clubs of London!—Every fashionable street has its Club; and the West End a whole street of them, where the society you advocate may be obtained on the easiest terms."

"The Clubs?"—cried the pessimist. "The Clubs!—talk of the Clubs in the way of social intercourse!—For what were they instituted, pray, but that the Englishman's fireside might be permanently ex-domesticated, in a spot where the claims of civilization are altogether abolished?—A spot where the fireside is secure from petticoat participation; where hundreds of coat-flaps may be uplifted instead of a pair; a special mart of social egotism; an association for the encouragement of selfishness, for the promotion of unchristian sensuality.—Since the establishment of Clubs, which, instead of forwarding cheerful intercommunication with his fellow creatures, a

man of what is called good company, affects to frequent, for the enjoyment of his newspaper, his cigar, or his solitary meal,—the theatres, concert-rooms, coteries, and all other places of public entertainment have been deserted, — or, rather bequeathed to the exclusive use of the weaker moiety of the human race. And why?—Because, sir, these Clubs are an institution founded upon the same confounded system of fireside enjoyment—an enlarged edition of the Englishman's fireside—the Englishman's *confounded* fireside!"—

"Still," persisted Ramble, (in the provoking little "*filet de voix*" which Molière ascribes to "*la raison*,") "you must admit that, however it may deteriorate John Bull's intelligence, the domestic fireside constitutes the cradle of his virtues—"

"Curse on his virtues!—they've undone his country!"

cried Sir Jos, in the phrase applied by Addison to Cato, and by a modern moralist to George III. "Because King George chose to dine on a shoulder of mutton, (at the hour when his roué son was breakfasting on a

devilled fowl,) he was allowed to fling away America without reproof, and to hang thirty forgers of one-pound notes and aces of spades, per month, without scruple of conscience! So is it with that arch-humbug of humbugs, John Bull; who allows himself to revel in oceans of gin and bitters—to gamble away his inheritance, from the pea and thimble-rig to Crockford's or the Railway Market—to render our public thoroughfares a school of the filthiest immorality, —to do everything that is vile and vicious in a fifty-fold more glaring and offensive manner than his neighbours, because he pays his taxes, toasts Church and State, and proses to any one who will listen to him, about the charms of an Englishman's fireside!—”

“Nevertheless, I think I could prove to you,” persisted Ramble, with undisturbed equanimity, “that much of what you have advanced”——

He was interrupted by a violent slam of the door. While the optimist was caressing his legs, and admiring the set of his boots, the pessimist had shaken hands with me and departed, leaving the smiling Joe in undis-

turbed possession of the hearthrug, in that characteristic and uncereemonious attitude of self-indulgence which has become typical, from one end of Europe to the other of—
THE ENGLISHMAN'S FIRESIDE.

THE POPULAR AUTHOR.

RICHARD FOSBROOK,—or rather Dick, for the abbreviation which his good-fellowship had won for him at Westminster and Cambridge did not desert him upon his entrance into the real man-and-woman world of society, was a very excellent personage;—something more substantial than a mere “good fellow;” a well-informed, sensible man, with more originality of talent than a reserved disposition permitted to rise to the surface.

His shyness at length took refuge behind a title-page. That which he found no courage to say, he resolved to write. “Some sin, his parents’ or his own,” had dipped him early in life in ink. His infant elegy upon his mother’s favourite tabby had been

wept over by every maiden-aunt of the house of Fosbrook; his translations had been applauded by Busby; his prize-poems printed at Cambridge. He had lodged in the same house with Lord Byron; his grandmother was a Hayley; his bankers, Rogers, Towgood, and Co.

Such a concatenation of impulses was irresistible, and Dick Fosbrook became an author! One fatal and highly unpoetical stumble befel him, however, upon the very brink of Helicon. He married;—neither a muse, nor a Madame Dacier; but a very pretty girl, reasonably rich, and unreasonably silly;—a professional alliance, for she was the daughter of a master in Chancery, and Dick was already at the bar.

The duties of his legal vocation did not interfere with his homage to the Nine; or, as his wife persisted in calling them, the foolish virgins. He wrote, he published, and wrote and published again; and if “the learned world said nothing to his paradoxes,” he was equally taciturn as to the amount of the printer’s bill, which he annually pocketed with a genuine Christmas

groan! He flattered himself he wrote for immortality; that post-orbit bond, the dishonouring of which falls so lightly on our feelings!—and his wife and her relations, who regarded authorship as a lawless and cabalistic calling, inimical to the interests of church and state, and an increasing family, exulted in the premature deaths which unfailingly awaited his literary progeny.

I dined with him once or twice at this period of his domestic felicity and public misfortunes, and never beheld a happier or more contented man. He laughed heartily at my bad jokes on withered laurels, Lethe, and the stream of Time; assuring me that the indulgent public was a dunce, “sans ears, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing;” while his wife, half aside, whispered that the ingratitude of this senseless dunce had luckily alienated his mind from his former unprofitable studies.

“*Sur ces entrefaites*,” my own equally profitless pursuits led me to the Continent; and while vagabondizing in Italy, a paragraph in Galignani’s Journal bore honourable mention of “Mr. Fosbrook, the popu-

lar author!"—"Poor Dick!" said I, involuntarily, "no relation of thine, I fear!"

Yet 'twas the same,—the very Dick I knew!

One of his least meritorious works had made what is called a hit: and he was now the "darling of the Muses," and better still, of the booksellers; one of the literary ephemera, basking in the transient sunshine of modern fame.

Soon afterwards, I landed at Dover, arrived in town,—heard the muffin-bell once more—that

———"Squilla di lontano

Che paja 'l giorno pianger che si muore!"

and deposited myself and my yellow valet, Gioacchino, in an hotel in Brook Street.

Next day I wandered to my old club, which was grown as fine and uncomfortable as "Ninette à la cour;" heard my contemporaries observe, as they glanced towards a mirror, that I was miserably altered; lost my way in a wilderness of new streets, and my footing in a plunge through the puddles of a Macadamized square; and just as I was recovering my equilibrium of body

if not of temper, perceived a lank, rueful visage, gazing sympathizingly upon my mischance. 'Twas a strangely familiar face,—'twas Fosbrook's ;—not Dick, but the "popular author !" —

His dolorous physiognomy expanded into smiles on this unexpected recognition ; and, taking my arm, and my way onwards, we turned literally and figuratively to the passages of our youth, till he almost became Dick again by the force of reminiscence. Nay ! had it not been for the deferential salutation of two wise men, two very learned pundits, and the raised hats of a bustling Westminster-ward Member or two whom we met scuffling down Regent-street, his popularity and his authorship would have been forgotten between us.

"Dine with me to-morrow," said he at parting, "we shall be alone, and can gossip over former days."

"With all my heart," I answered. "At five,—in Gower-street ?"—

"No, no ! at seven, in Curzon-street ;" but the words came not trippingly from his tongue.

The morrow came, and I was delighted to find that, among the various removes of the day, dear Old Bond-street had not changed its town residence, although "almost ashamed to know itself;" and as I re-paraded my daily walks and ancient neighbourhood, I was startled by the sight of poor Fosbrook's face frowning in all the panes of the print-shops. There, at least, he was no Dick of mine; for his worthy countenance was distorted into a most cynical sneer, and he looked as blue and yellow as an Edinburgh review. Rain came on, and I was driven to the cruel refuge of a morning-visit; when, having excused myself from an impromptu dinner invitation, through my "pre-engagement to my friend Mr. Fosbrook—The popular author,"—I was amused to find that even to be his friend was a rising point in the thermometer of fashion.

My intervention was humbly prayed to render him my friend's friend too.

Poor Fosbrook! I remember the time when I scarcely contrived to procure a third man to make up dumbmy whist with him; he being considered a chartered bore, by

right divine, and according to the most approved authorities!

It was, however, with a feeling nearly amounting to respect for his new honours, that I trod lightly upon the creaking step of my hackney coach at the door of his new mansion, and was ushered by a sulky butler into a very literary-looking drawing-room. Over the marble chimney-piece, supported by sphinxes in *giallo antico*, hung a fine portrait of its master, in oils, by Lawrence; and over a buhl secrétaire, a spirited sketch by Hayter—the original of the print in the Bond-street windows.—Poor Fosbrook!—I remember the time when a paltry profile was the only copy of his countenance! Several proofs of splendid new engravings were “ordered to lie on the table,” beside a few presentation copies of the latest works of the day.

“Are they good for anything?” said I to Dick, who found me with a volume in my hands.

“I really cannot take upon me to say,” he replied, gravely, and with the air of a man afraid of committing himself. “One

of the worst consequences of scribbling is, that we have no leisure to look over these light productions, which are sometimes far from unamusing."

"*We !*"—Thinks I to myself, editorial! while Richard (for I will Dick him no more) turned to the final page of the several works, and examined their length as the standard of their merits.

A very light production now entered the room—Mrs. Fosbrook, looking as dressy as the frontispiece of "*La Belle Assemblée*." But if her gown were *couleur de rose*, her brow was black as Erebus. The honours which had made him sad, had made her cross. I did not care. I had never abbreviated *her* name; so as it was the May of a London summer, I turned for consolation towards a fire bright enough to roast St. Lawrence.

This movement necessitated a glance towards the card-rack, and I observed that its prominent features were "At Homes" from Lansdowne House and the Marquis of Northampton, and a "requests the honour" from the Dowager Lady Holland.

"Aha!" said I to myself, "your popular author is ever a diner out."

I trust my friend Fosbrook was an habitual one; or at least, that he did not affect to be "L'Amphitryon où l'on dine." The solid joint and solid pudding of St. Pancras had been ill-exchanged, in his *menu*, for the ill-dressed *filets* and *fricandeaux* of St. George's; and hot St. Peray and iced Laffitte were abominable substitutes for the old Madeira and old Port of old times.

By the time the cloth and the lady were withdrawn, I was as much out of humour as Mrs. Fosbrook with popular authorship. To judge by the lowering brow of my host, his feelings were tuned to a key as doleful as my own. As we were *tête-à-tête*, I ventured an apostrophe to the memory of the Gower-street port; a fortunate digression; for the butler was summoned, the cork squeaked beneath the screw, and Richard was himself again!

"You have an excellent house here, Fosbrook!"

"Why, yes;—the situation is good, and the distribution better. Yet somehow or

other, even in my perfection of a 'gentleman's room,' I regret my Crusoe's cave in Gower-street. There, I was never interrupted by importunate idlers. My books ungilt and unprisoned behind the glittering wires of a library, came at my call. In short, I was able to read, and think, and write, as I liked."

"And as others liked," said I courteously. "My return to England has discovered to me an old friend in the most popular author of the day."

Fosbrook literally shuddered at the word. "No more of that, and thou lovest me!" exclaimed he, in a tone of acute sensibility. "Keep the name for the first dog you wish to see hanged."

"Pho, pho!" said I, "the mere cant of affected modesty! You have won your laurels bravely: do not wear them like a coward. They were long, it is true, in putting forth their verdant honours: but now it would seem as if 'Birnam wood were come to Dunsinane.'"

Fosbrook shook his head despondingly; and his whole air was so completely hypo-

chondriac, that, spite of myself, I burst into a hearty fit of laughter. By good luck, it proved contagious, and having roared and shouted "*à qui mieux mieux*," the happy tone of our former intimacy was re-established between us.

"The fact is, my dear fellow," resumed Fosbrook, lowering his voice, "that I have led the life of a galley-slave since I came to my title—."

"Title?"

"Of popular author;—a title good for nothing but to expose one without redress to the insolence of every scribbler whose pen is the channel of his venom. No one presumes to insult a gentleman, or tell a man that he is a fool. But a popular author is the property of the public,—'its goods, its chattels, its ox, its ass, its every thing!'—a culprit stuck up in the pillory of celebrity to be pelted by all the ragamuffins of the times."

"And yet I can remember your eyes being upturned towards the Temple of Fame, as a devotee gazes upon the sanctuary."

“Ay, ay! I looked at it through a telescope :

‘Tis distance lends enchantment to the view!’

and the farther the better!—I had not then assumed the ‘foolscap uniform turned up with ink;’ I had not donned the livery of the booksellers to ‘fetch and carry sing song up and down!’—I published, it is true, —but what then?—The sin lay dormant between you and me and the press! I lived secure from criticism. Not a reptile of a magazine deigned to tickle me with its puny antennæ.—My wife, however angry, borrowed no sarcasms from the leading reviews—‘I found not Croker’s satire on her lips,—I slept the next night well —was free—was happy.’ On the strength of my uncut pages, I passed, in my own select circle, for a literary man; my family took me for a genius, and my servants for a conjuror. But now—my pages and myself are cut together.”—

“My dear Dick!” said I soothingly, for he had talked himself into a fit of irritation, “remember how often and how phi-

losophically you have declared yourself indifferent to the award of criticism."

"There, you have me on the hip. My wife's family, and all the generation of bores at my former end of the town, are constantly reminding me that it is idle to value public opinion, since I have often asserted the world to be an overgrown booby; to which I can only reply, like Benedict, that 'When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live to be married.' When I wrote the public down an ass. I little expected to become a popular author!"

"But after all," I observed, "these are trivial vexations, compared with the glories of the daily incense burnt upon your altars, and the solid gains achieved by your exertions."

"Let me show some of the daily incense!" said Fosbrook, opening his pocket-book; "unfortunately it is made to be read first and burnt afterwards. It is a paragraph from a morning paper."

"*Lege, Dick, lege!*"

"We copy the following interesting in-

telligence from the Newcastle Mercury. 'MR. FOSBROOK the POPULAR AUTHOR. We are happy to be the first to congratulate our townsmen upon the near and dear claim we can boast upon the parentage of this celebrated man. Richard Toppleshoe, formerly a master tailor in North Lane, but at the period of his decease a much respected member of our corporation, proves to have been his maternal grandfather. Many still surviving among us retain a lively remembrance of the full-buckled flaxen wig and brocaded waistcoat of old Toppleshoe; and there can be little doubt that from this eccentric knight of the shears, Mr. Fosbrook derives much of his originality of mind, his baptismal name, and private fortune.'"

"Very provoking, certainly," said I, perceiving that some comment was unavoidable.

"Till I read that cursed paragraph," observed Fosbrook, "I had always believed and proclaimed myself to be of irreproachable descent, and the representative of an old Northumbrian family; and had I never be-

come a popular author, I should have remained in ignorance that I had a Toppletoe for my mother!—but listen to another of these precious bulletins of the state of my reputation.

“ ‘ Bow Street.—MR. FOSBROOK.—Another instance of the irregularities of genius came this morning before the attention of the bench. The above popular author, returning from a deep carouse with some brother wits,—some choice spirits, who appear to have been partial to proof spirits,—chancing to unite the rampant valour of Othello with the disastrous plight of Cassio, fell into an outrageous affray with the guardians of the night — (‘ Guardians! I wish they would make the night a ward in Chancery!’ ejaculated Dick,) and was at length victoriously lodged in the watchhouse. Our worthy chief-magistrate considerably gave this delicate case a hearing in his private room; and after a few pertinent (qy. *im*?) observations to the delinquent, upon the respect due to public decency, even from the *genus irritabile*, he fined him five shillings and dismissed him with costs; judging, probably, that Mr.

Fosbrook had already received poetical justice in the shape of two black eyes."

"Very provoking," said I again. "And *did* you pass the night in the watchhouse?"

"Not I!—I appeared before Sir Richard as a witness in favour of an Irish apple-woman, whom I had caught the parish beadle in the act of maltreating, by virtue of some Street Bill. Unfortunately, I was recognised by some dirty reporter, who doubled his morning's pay by compounding this scurrilous attack."

"But of course you remonstrated with the Editor?"

"I did; and my very forbearing letter produced a second paragraph, headed 'MR. FOSBROOK. We are authorized by this gentleman to state that he did not appear before Sir Richard Birnie with *two* black eyes.'"

"Well, well!" said I, "these idle slanders, if they filch from you your good name, do not steal the trash from your purse. Think of the solid profits, my dear Dick."—

"I do, and with regret; for they are all gone. Every poor relation (Toppletoes in particular), and every literary acquaintance I

had in the world, gave me the preference of their first application for a loan, on the second edition of my last work ; nor does there exist a literary institution, or an establishment for the encouragement of the Fine Arts, for which my guineas have not been peremptorily claimed. Meanwhile, my law has long since left me in the lurch, and my father-in-law abhors me because I play shorts. He has persuaded my wife to send the boys to school, lest I should undermine their morals. The old gentleman holds that all modern authors are atheists."

"But what is become of your orthodox friend, the Dean of ——?"

"We have not been on speaking terms these six months : he is persuaded he can detect my hand in the anatomization of his Emancipation pamphlet in the new review."

"And Lorimer, our college chum?"

"Has basely deserted my cause ; he goes about 'with his hand in his breeches' pocket, like a crocodile,' whispering that I have been puffed beyond my strength ; that I have no stamina for the tug of war. My old friends affect to suppose that I have

risen above them; and since I have been noticed by half a dozen rhyming Lords, my wife's relations say I am grown fine, and have given over inviting me; while Sophia, as if in retribution, will never visit half a mile from the land of her ancestors, Bloomsbury!—She is gone there to-night.”

“Mrs. Fosbrook gone out!” I exclaimed. “Then come with me to the Opera; we shall be in time for the ballet.”

“Willingly,—I have a silver ticket.”

We rose from table; the butler was hastily summoned, and entered with a huge and portentous packet in either hand. Dick broke the seal of the largest, and read aloud—

“Albemarle Street.

“DEAR SIR,

“I BEG to forward you the Number of ——— Review, which appeared this day, and which contains some strictures on your new work. Permit me to say that I consider them highly illiberal, and have always thought the Editor an envious little man.

“I have the honour to be,”

&c. &c. &c.

"Don't read the article, my dear Dick. Pray don't. It will only make you bilious."

"I will *not*," he replied, resolutely tossing it aside. Martin!—call a coach."

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the man, presenting the other pistol—packet I would say,—“Mr. Bentley's printer has been waiting impatiently these two hours. He says it is the 24th of the month.”

"The devil!" exclaimed the unhappy Fosbrook in dismay. "Alas! it is not the first time my patience has been 'put to the proof.'"

I left him alone with his glory. Sympathy forbade my attempting the Opera; and I went home to bed; where, thanks to Dick's deplorable destiny, or deplorable claret, I had an excruciating nightmare—the most appalling vision suggested by its influence, was, that I had attained the fearful honours of A POPULAR AUTHOR!

THE TRAVELLED MAN.

FOR many centuries past, the travelled man has been accounted one of the nuisances of social life. Dr. Donne has more than one fling at him in his Satires. Old Burton, in his *Anatomie*, is equally unsparing; and Shakspeare, who would never have been called Old Shakspeare had he lived to the age of Methuselah, so bright with the vivid impulses of youth are all the creations of his brain, has poured forth his spleen in many a racy passage against those English courtiers who think themselves the wiser for "having seen the Louvre," and puppies who become arch-puppies from having "swum in a gondola."

But what would these old English worthies have said to the race of modern

pretenders, to whom the Nile is a wash-pot, and who over Edom have cast their shoe ! Where is the lordling, now-a-days, who contents himself with the jog-trôt grand tour that perfected the gentility of Philip Earl of Chesterfield ;—or what country baronet is satisfied to rival the Italian adventures of Sir Charles Grandison ? The land of Egypt is the universal mark ! The fear of the bow-string being no longer before their eyes, the travelled men of the day affect to regard the young Sultan as a sort of “Swell Abdul Medjib,” and betake themselves in their yachts to the Dardanelles, as formerly to the Solent ; while every classic-bitten young gentleman of fortune who has sapped his way to an honour at Cambridge, thinks himself called upon not only to go Byronizing to Thermopylæ, but to have a finger in the pie of Athenian politics. As if modern Greece could not furnish schemers and *intrigants* of its own, without aid from the prating and scribbling of Young England and its offsets.

With such objects in view, in addition to the charming scenery of the “circling

Cyclades," and soul-thrilling chance of being murdered by the Klephtes of the Levant, "the little military hot-house," once famed for the coolness of its knights as well as for the sultriness of its days, witnesses every autumn the disembarkation of hundreds of fashionable travellers on their way to the East; who stop at Malta, as they would at Grange's, to eat an orange by the way.

But why are these travellers for their own pleasure to convert it into pain and grief for society?—Who cares a fig for their exploits at Smyrna?—Who wants to know the colour of the Sultana's bathing-dresses at Buyukdere?—And why cannot they content themselves with the Nile, *et præterea nihil*, without cramming us with crocodiles for the remainder of their days?—It is much to the credit of Noah that the account of *his* voyage was condensed into a couple of verses; and if the fashionable tourists who monster their nothings to our dismay at the London dinner-tables, or who delight the critics of the Quarterly by "little lady-like books of travels," were equally considerate with the

cruising patriarch, the world would have cause to be thankful.

There was safety, indeed, in magnifying the marvels of foreign countries, so long as there existed no critical press to place successive writers in the witness-box for cross-examination ; and when the

Proud, conceited, talking spark,

who declared the chameleon to be blue, had little chance of being contradicted. But now that, even when a man tells the plain truth, like Mungo Park, or Waterton, or Head, he is sure to be accused of wonder-mongering, where is the pleasure of edifying a company by an account of the marvels of Karnak or the glories of Niagara?—So often has their tale been told, that Turner, or Roberts, or Prout might dash out as good an impromptu likeness of either, as if they had sat for their portraits ; and not a ready stringer-together of verse, from Macaulay and Smythe, down to Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, but possesses the means of improvisating a graphic sonnet in their honour.

Nothing, therefore, can be more frivolous and vexatious than to have some dunder-headed gentleman in a country house seizing the party day after day by the ear, in order that he may prose them dead with his account of his Egyptian or Canadian tour,

Which oft was writ, but ne'er so ill-expressed.

Were he not a travelled man,—were he simply privileged to talk about the Wrekin or Colebrook Dale, for instance,—people would soon show him that he was too great an ass to be listened to. But it seems an article of faith with many, that the mere act of crossing the Desert converts the dullest narrator into an Alvanley; and thus encouraged, the travelled man goes grinding on, wearing down one's spirits by the tameness of his thrice-told tale, in the tone in which people used to potter about Paris, the Rhine, or the German baths, thirty years ago, before the use of steam had vulgarised everything within a thousand miles of the Tower stairs into the “daily haunt and ancient neighbourhood” of the Oxford Street haberdashers.

Scarcely a city clerk of the present day but has gone through the two last cantos of "Childe Harold," line by line, and mile by mile, plucking lilies on the Drachenfels, and listening by moonlight to the owls in Cæsar's palace or the Coliseum ; and not a coterie at Pentonville but endures, over its green-tea and muffins, the same tortures which are inflicted in Arlington Street by Sir Henry or Lord Francis over his venison and hock.

For the Pentonvillians, however, there is some excuse. *They* have no Travellers' Club for the privileged emission of travellers' wonders ; the admirable foresight with which the more aristocratic class of tourists provided themselves with a refuge where they might tell their lies and smoke their chibouks in peace, being at present unemulated by those who—thanks to the General Steam Navigation Company—have found their way from "LONDON TO COLOGNE IN TWENTY HOURS—Fare thirteen and fourpence."

The aspect of the blank walls within ten miles round the metropolis during the summer season, affords in itself sufficient attestation of the locomotive propensities of the

nation which invented Robinson Crusoe, and publishes as many volumes of travels, per annum, as would line all the trunks of the three capitals of the British Empire. In place of the puffs of Day and Martin's blacking, or the "Try Turner's," which succeeded the placards of the lottery offices, nothing is now to be seen but lists of steam-packets, and the prices and hours of starting of foreign railroads; and so long as a gleam of autumnal sunshine brightens our sullen atmosphere, invitations stare us in the face at every turn, to annihilate time and space, and allow ourselves to be transported to the middle of Europe, in about the time it took the Nassau Balloon to accomplish the transit; that is, about half the time it formerly took a Welsh baronet to transplant his family from the ale and toasted cheese of his paternal acres, to the metropolis.

But surely those who are thus enabled to come like shadows, and so depart, and *vice versa*, ought to assimilate their memories with their movements. So long as it required half a life to reach the Red Sea, a man might be pardoned for spending the other half in re-

membering and making others remember the journey. But the Red Sea is now as familiar as Chelsea Reach ; and the impostor who presumes to set up as a Conversation Man on the strength of it, deserves to be laid in it for his pains.

The most travelled of travelled men should make it his business to acquire the admirable *sang froid* of Lady Sale, with her "Earthquakes as usual:" or the *nonchalance* of a fashionable sportsman of our acquaintance, who, being careful in the keeping of his game-book, has an entry relating to the sporting seasons of his Oriental tour of 1838,

Killed 12 brace of elephants ;
 „ 12 couple of rhinoceroses ;
 „ 32 ditto buffaloes ;
 „ 3 camels ;
 „ 7 brace of ostriches ;
 „ 1 crocodile ;
 „ 137 brace of humming-birds ;
 „ 3 boa-constrictors ; and
 „ 2 pair of rattlesnakes.

In the early part of the present century, when the ponderous quartos of Dr. Clark and Sir John Carr came forth annually, to

be hanged like millstones round the necks of the rising generation, the restraints of war-time rendered the Travelled Man less insupportable, whether in print or as a running accompaniment to a good dinner. Everybody had not then learned by the evidence of his own eyes that the Black Sea is blue, and the White Sea green. But, in the interim, parties have gone walrus-shooting to the North Pole, as coolly as they used to go and shoot wild ducks on Whittlesea Mere; and unhappy martyrs to the cause of discovery now grill themselves on the sands of Timbuctoo, as once on those of Brighton. An enterprising captain has galloped across the Pampas on an ostrich; and as to the overland journey from India, it has become of such daily occurrence, that it might be a good spec. for some modern Fozard to set up a riding-school, with a good stable-full of camels, to qualify adventurous ladies and gentlemen for the exploit.

And yet there may be found, even to this present day, men sufficiently barefaced to talk about some stupid steamboat expedition on the Danube or grouse-shooting party

in Dalecarlia, as if such miserable excursions were worthy to be mentioned to ears polite.—

But it is not alone the multitudes of persons who “go forth for to see,” which have invalidated the vocation of the Travelled Man. The world and its wonders are at the trouble of coming half-way to meet *us*. What panoramas, dioramas, and cosmoramas have sprung up of late years, to bring the four quarters of the globe within Cockney ken!—What models in cork, and models in wax, and models in relief, of foreign cities!—What explosions of volcanoes at the Surrey Zoological Gardens, and what dissolving views at the Adelaide Gallery!—Not a scene of note, from one end of the world to the other, but has been pounced upon by the paw of British art—painted, engraved, mezzotinted, or lithographed,—published in numbers, or doomed to shine in single blessedness in the printsellers windows!—

But more than all this, the very natives of these foreign countries have been imported for our edification. In addition to mahogany and logwood, speculators have brought

across the Atlantic, I-o-ways and O-jibbe-ways. We have had Laplanders, with their huts and moose-deer. We have had Chinese with all the appliances and means of their domestic life. We have had Tyrolean families, and Bohemian minstrels, shouting their hearts out. We have had

Birds of all feather,—beasts of every name
That shun mankind, or seek them,—wild or tame.

We have had the Imaum of Muscat, Mr. N. P. Willis, Dwarknauth Tagore, Mohun Lal, and a variety of other half-civilized barbaresques, exhibiting their uncouthness at our lion-feeds; so that those who talk of

Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders,

have henceforward a very poor chance of being listened to.

Every body knows that the best books of travels ever written have been compiled by Cockney authors in their garrets in Grub-street. Defoe was a man acquainted with the "vasty deep," only by repute; and very happy was the inquiry made by Boulanger of

Théophile Gautier, on the eve of his Spanish tour, "How will you manage to write and talk about Spain, after you have seen it?" Byron, who wrote so graphically of Rome, spent but a hurried fortnight there; and Scott declared himself incapable of describing a scene which he had recently visited.

There is consequently every reason to infer that the folks who so belabour us with the cataracts of Upper Egypt, and will not let one off a single brick of the Pyramids, have never been within a mile of a mummy. Secure from the notoriety which used formerly to attach to travellers in climes remote, who obtained a surname (as Kings were called John Lackland or Henry Beauclerc,) of Athenian Stuart or Abyssinian Bruce,—they romance *à discrétion*.

One of the most amusing specimens of tourist-kind consists in the travelled family occasionally to be met with in remote countries; whose collections of the meanest kind of foreign curiosities, the refuse of *ciceroni* and *valets de place*, maintain in the eyes of their country-neighbours all the consequence of a museum. A few paltry models of a

Swiss chalet, a gondola, the Coliseum in cork, and the Lake of Tivoli in wool, a coral charm against the evil eye, from Naples, sulphurs from Vesuvius, and a villanous mismatch of coins, medals, cameos, and intaglios, antiques of the newest make and fashion,— suffice as a pretext for the Babel-like confusion of bad French and Italian they choose to jabber for the remainder of their days; while the uncouthness of a German booby who officiates as their butler, and the fantasticality of a French nondescript engaged as *femme de chambre*, complete the discomfort of their establishment and serve to excuse its irregularities in the eyes of the parish.

Sir Robert Spragson is a respectable country baronet whose ancestors were as stationary in the county of Worcester as the Malvern Hills; and except when, as High Sheriff for the county, he made his appearance in London at the Prince Regent's *levée*, the utmost of the good man's excursions from Spragson Hall have never exceeded Cheltenham or Aberystwith. A large family and moderate income have combined to keep him sedentary; and caused his sons and

daughters to be brought up at country schools, for the better certainty of remaining bumpkins and gawkies.

Three great heavy lads took their places successively at their father's dinner-table, strong as his ale and ruddy as his beef; the joy of whose life it was to shoot his game and troll for his jack. The eldest, as heir-apparent, had nothing else to do. The second, having a family-living hatching for him, was crammed during a portion of the day by the parson of the parish, previous to being entered at the university; while the third was articulated to his father's solicitor in Lincoln's Inn. Three or four times in the course of the year, they were reunited under the hospitable old roof of Spragson Hall; where they found their old father and mother pursuing their old-fashioned way, and their clumsy sisters plodding through their worsted work, after the good old custom of the family for generations immemorial.

But to the great surprise of the neighbours, the Christmas holidays of a few years back, were signalized at Spragson Hall by

the return from the continent of the fourth son, Henry, whom most people believed to be still at College; but who, it appeared, had persuaded his family to sanction a prolonged tour abroad, in company with two other Cantabs who shared with him the cost and care of a travelling tutor.

The Spragsons had probably communicated the fact to their friends. But people were so little in the habit of listening to their humdrum stories, that the circumstance escaped the general attention. When known, however, all applauded. "It was a capital move.—Three lubbers were enough in the Spragson tribe.—Lucky that *one* at least of the name would not be quite a ploughboy!"

And lo! the family dinners of the Spragsons were looked forward to, that winter, with the utmost impatience.

A single *one* sufficed!—The transformation undergone by the poor old Hall caused the eyes and hands of half the county to be raised compassionately to heaven. In place of the solid fare of its olden time, a series of opaque nastinesses professing to be *salmis* and *capilotardes*, *cotelettes à la this*, and *frican-*

deux à la that, were handed round awkwardly by country footmen who took care to dip the tags of their aiguillettes into the dish, while the starving guests were forced to divert themselves with the singular spectacle of a profusion of pears, apples, and the whole of the housekeeper's preserves, set out with the pretence of being a *dîner à la Russe*; where the dessert, only, figures on the table, because the dessert is of the most agreeable and gorgeous description.

The foolish old baronet and his wife had been assured by their travelled son that such was now the custom of the best tables on the continent; and, lacking the customary ornaments and *pièces montées* for the attempt, the once hospitable dinner-table of the Spragsons presented the appearance of an indifferent luncheon; where "five nothings on five plates of Delft" are set out by an ill-provided housekeeper, by way of garnish, as a substitute for the cold fowls and raised pies that are wanting.

The country squires consoled themselves, during this Barmecides' feast, with the recollection of Sir Robert Spragson's famous old

port, and capital sherry. But alas! when the tepid Charlotte Russe and dissolving Plombières had gone their rounds, and nothing remained to be fallen upon but the candied oranges and *compôtes* of green-gages, on which, for the last hour, they had been wistfully gazing, it became clear that, with the remainder of the good cheer, port, sherry, and madeira were banished. *Very* light claret, in very heavy pitchers, made the round of the table *en charrette*; after a glass or two of which, the country neighbours who had been gazing so long upon pyramids of pears and pippins, thought of the cholera, and trembled.

They had not much leisure for the indulgence of their fears. It had become the custom of the Spragsons for men and women to rise from table together. After the French fashion, every lady placed her arm under that of a gentleman; and, to the utter sacrifice of county politics on one side, and small gossip on the other, they were forced to hurry in to coffee.

“Give me your good old English customs!” cried they of the quorum, accustomed to

fight over again, at their dinner parties, the squabbles of the Quarter Sessions. "What the deuce!—is Spragson beginning to be stingy with his wine?"

These rumours, however, reached not the head of the family. Sir Robert was lost in admiration of the three profound bows, *les trois saluts d'usage*, bestowed upon each of his parting guests by his travelled son; whose pigeon-breasted waistcoat, embroidered shirt, and marcasite buttons, gave him somewhat the air of a travelling empiric. While the country neighbours felt disposed to knock down the presuming young jack-anapes strutting like a jay in borrowed plumes, whose impertinent interference had spoiled one of the most sociable houses in the county, the poor old baronet and his lady waxed almost as uneasy as Monsieur and Madame Jourdain, lest, after all their pains, they should not have done things in the right way. The poor girls, too, sat trembling, lest, after the departure of the company, the fastidious Henry should commence his usual accusations against them of being "*fagottées, que c'était peine à voir*," and his

entreaties that they would consign their ill-made gowns, and shoes, and gloves, and every thing else that was theirs, to the fire.

A whole party, in short, made thoroughly miserable in order to gratify the ostentatious affectation of a Travelled Man!—All this, however, is but a pale copy of the odiousness of the Travelled Man of the great world,—the Travelled Man who should know better.—

Scarcely a dinner-party of the London season (of that order of dinner-parties where people go to regale their ears as well as their palate), but is open to the deterioration of one of these Talk-Mills. The late Lady Holland, who could look down importunate babblers into dust and ashes, could not look down one of *them*!—But the chief arena for the display of their genius for boring, consists in the blue breakfasts which the men *à prétention* of London life, are in the habit of giving, in imitation of Rogers.

Let the choicest talking man of the day open his lips at one of these meetings, on the subject of continental politics, or the state of the arts in foreign countries, and a smile

of superiority, bitterer than the bitterest sneer, is discharged like a spattering of vitriol in his face.

"The Emperor of Russia *pleased* with his journey through Italy?" —Ahem!" —The travelled man is "very glad to hear it.—He happened to be at Florence when Nicholas passed through. He happened to have the honour of being presented to him at Rome."

"The Emperor, then, was not on such friendly terms with the Pope as the newspapers have given us to understand?" demands some plain-sailing guest, who "asks for information."

"The newspapers! Oh! if people once begin to put faith in newspapers!—But to what newspaper does the gentleman allude?—Certainly not to the 'Quotidienne!'—Certainly not to the 'Diario di Roma!'—Certainly not to the 'Algemeine Zeitung!'"—

"No! he alluded to 'The Times'—the only newspaper he was in the habit of reading."

At mere mention of "The Times" the mouth of the travelled man is wreathed into the shape of the handle of a wicker basket.

“ ‘The Times?’ —Yes! he believed that in *England* people were still to be found who assigned some credit to ‘The Times.’ It was a great pity, however, that the gentleman who appeared to be interested in European politics never read ‘The Débats;—the Journal des Débats’ being beyond all question, the best edited newspaper in the world. The mass of talent enlisted in the service of ‘The Journal des Débats’ was something incredible.”

The champion of the Times instantly buckles on his armour, and fights a good fight for it,—adducing the amount of salary given by the leading journal to professional men, and the amount of premiums squandered for priority of information.

The travelled man observes, with a double-edged sneer, that “carrier-pigeons, and the tidings furnished by some treacherous private secretary, do not, after all, insure the *summum bonum* of political intelligence. The other evening, at Paris, he was discussing that very question with Molé and Princess Lieven,—who were quite of his opinion.”

“And what do *they* consider the *summum bonum* of political intelligence?”—inquires the pertinacious questioner, who “asks for information.”

“Oh—a—why a—exactly what my friend Prince Metternich once observed to me, as we were discussing the question at the Baths of Ischl. ‘You know Colloredo?’ said he. —‘You have seen so much of the world, that you cannot but know Colloredo?—Well! I was once inquiring of Colloredo how he managed to obtain such very correct’—But I beg ten thousand pardons!” cries the Travelled Man, suddenly interrupting himself, “I perceive I am growing indiscreet. One has no right to betray confidential conversation, however strongly tempted by the interest which I see you do me the honour to assign to the sayings of such a man as my friend Metternich.”

“Come, come, my dear sir!” cries one of the conversation men, “you must not tantalize us at this rate. We can’t allow you to play Tiberius and Tacitus at one and the same time.”

“He should be called William the

Tathiturn!" observes Lord Richard, one of the budding blue lordlings of Infant England.

"William the Taciturn?—Ay, by the way, I had the satisfaction of seeing that fine statue of Nieuwekerke's inaugurated the other day at the Hague;—a splendid work of art—but, unluckily, the horse, like the rider and the sculptor, is a *leetle* too Dutch."

"*Dutch?*"—exclaim all present. "A *Dutch* sculptor?—artist, or amateur?—young or old?"—

"Do you really mean to say," replies the Travelled Man, "that you never heard of Nieuwekerke—the *handsome* Nieuwekerke—the pearl of the Faubourg St. Germain,—the idol of the Legitimists?—Do you pretend to be ignorant of his famous adventure with—But I see, I see!—you are laying a trap for me,—and I was young enough *almost* to allow myself to be betrayed into a *guet-à-pens*."

"But I assure you—"

"No, no! do not assure me!—I am discretion itself. It would not do for a person

who goes about the world as I do, to degenerate into a tale-bearer.—Of all things in the world, I eschew *les cancans*.”

Such is about the average rate of information to be obtained from the supercilious lips of a modern TRAVELLED MAN!

THE LADY-KILLER.

HE is gone to his long account,—and a long account it must be,—that handsome cousin of mine, that terrible fellow, Major Manvers, whose memory I have taken upon myself to redeem from oblivion.

By common accord of the writing and reading world; the honourable title of Major has long been tinged with that worst of odium, ridicule. “Mrs. John Prevost” has immortalized

The odious Major Rock,
Who drops in at six o'clock;

and the author of “Pelham” was once on the eve of having to fight through the two United Service Clubs, on account of certain jests levelled at this only *too* highly-respectable grade of the military community. Even

the apostrophe of the great Wellington to the gallant Naplers,—“ Well done, *my Majors* ! ” did not suffice to render classical the much-degraded grade.

Be it understood, however, that *my* Major differed widely from the majority of Majors. He was no more like Major Sturgeon or Major O’Flaherty, than Canis Major is like Ursa Major. It is not, however, in his Major-ical capacity that I am about to consider him. I am about to treat of my Major, in the first instance, as still a minor.

Willoughby Manvers appears to have been born for the vocation of Lady killing. Even in his days of coral and bells, his future leaning towards the *belles* must have been perceptible ; or his godfather and godmother would scarcely have bestowed upon him at what the news-papers call the baptismal-font, the euphonous and most three-volume-like name of “ Willoughby.”

It is true his mother made vague allusions to a rich cousin in Lancashire, who, though unapparent among the sponsors, had requested that the infant might be named after himself. But, strange to relate, the most

careful investigation of the Ordnance maps imparted no insight into the localities of Willoughby Park; nor, among the rolls of that honourable county was there record of a Willoughby family whatever, saving one small esquire, the sire of eleven junior esquires: a John Willoughby, of no park at all, who could not by any possible process of magnification, be redeemed from the infinitesimals, or placed in the category of rich cousins. The bright blue eyes and dimpled chin of the smiling infant must, consequently, be accepted as Mrs. Manvers' sole apology for heroicizing her third son by the touching name of "Willoughby."

Preparatory schools have nearly the same faculty for mutilating names, as a provincial footman. The ineffable Willoughby was abbreviated in his nankeens into simple "Will," like the vulgarest William of them all. The first time the chariot of Mrs. Manvers rolled into the courtyard of Prospect House Academy, and she overheard a shout in the playground of "Hallo, Will! here's your mother!" she was forced to have recourse to her salt's-bottle.

“Of what avail to be choice in the specification of one’s offspring,” thought the dainty lady, “if such curtailments be sanctioned by academic authority!”

Names, however, are regulated by a sliding system,—elongated or shortened, even as the glasses of the great Herschel, or the still greater Omnibus-box at the Opera, when the latter extend their focus from the proximate petticoat of Cerito to the remote box of a beauty in the “two pair” at the opera. At Eton, Willoughby was himself again, *i. e.* again “Willoughby.” His dame was, fortunately, of a romantic turn; and, next to lordlings and little honourables, adored a lad in three syllables.

He was, accordingly, flogged as Manvers, but coaxed and kept up to supper by the gentle name of Willoughby. Need it be added that, while other lads were duncing their way through Homer, the favoured youth stuck fast in his Ovid; and that before he was out of his second apprenticeship to fate, *Ang.* before he had attained the mature age of fourteen, and the height of a Shetland pony, he had perpetrated a sonnet

"to ANNA;" whom other boys, more in favour with Anna's tender parent the pastry-cook, familiarized by the unpoetical name of "Nancy."

It was no fault of Willoughby! Willoughby "had an eye of tender blue," as Camoens and Lord Strangford have it: as well as "locks of Daphne's hue," as they also have it. What they mean I never could exactly determine, but conclude that Manvers' fair curls be pretty near the mark. His hands, moreover, were as fair as his curls, and his brow fairer. Everything about him, too, was fair but his verses; which Anna and the under-master pronounced to be only "*pretty* fair." The rest was both fair and pretty.

Unluckily for Willoughby, Parnassus and the Pierian spring so far outweighed with him the attraction of the Christopher and its claret, that he suffered himself to fall into the anti-Etonian error of acquiring an admirable hand-writing. Even at Prospect House he had been base enough, (probably under the influence of his prenomem of "Will,") to obtain the silver pen bestowed

by the writing-master, as the annual prize of penmanship ; and now, his sonneteering had betrayed him into the still further disgrace of writing a legible hand.

In those days, penny postage was not, and franking *was* ; and, by a process of logic not admitted in the schools, though intelligible enough at Eton, it was clear that Willoughby Manvers was not intended for a member of parliament. But there are many steps and gradations between writing oneself down M.P. and the ignominious designation to which the young calligrapher was thenceforward devoted by his matter-of-fact parent, Manvers senior, who had been christened by the plain and deteriorating name of Thomas, on finding his third hope so admirable a penman, actually destined him, in spite of his Willoughbyship, for a mercantile desk!— Oh ! hapless child of the Muses—a merchant's desk ! Had Nature Anna-thematized thee with so poetical a temperament only to be thus miserably degraded in the scale of Anna-mated being ?—

The boy rebelled,—that is, the man of which the boy saw himself about to become

the father, rebelled. On leaving Eton, and finding the preliminaries of a treaty in progress for transferring himself and his penmanship to the long-established firm of Messrs. Macpherson, Mumpson, and Spragg, of Great St. Helens, he grew desperate; and the sequel of his success in running-hand was, running away. Instead of answering to the name of either "Will" or "Willoughby," the return was "*non est inventus*." —But Willoughby had no will to return.

It appeared probable that the inspired youth had betaken himself to the wilds of Lancashire in search of the hall, park, or lodge, and cousinly-squire, its proprietor, rejoicing in the name to which his own nature was respondent. His pilgrimage was, perhaps, that of "Willoughby in search of a godfather."

Even his conscience-struck mamma appeared to participate in the notion; for, synonymous with the mysterious advertisements which appeared in "The Times" and "Courier," requiring all parochial and municipal authorities to have their eye upon a "genteel youth with blue eyes and light

hair, whose linen was marked W. M.," the Liverpool and Manchester Intelligencers were made to implore "the *young man* who had disappeared from the neighbourhood of Hanover Square, to return to his distracted parents, by whom matters would be arranged entirely to his satisfaction." There was a great deal of the mother in such an intimation.

It is a wise man who knows his own child (in initials); and in the "young man," as depicted by the Liverpool Intelligencer, Thomas M. knew not his rebellious boy. It mattered not,—for no W. M. presented himself. Where there is a Will, there is a way; but, where there is a Willoughby, there is *no* way to grow wealthy and wise in the way of clerkhood. To W. M. "the neighbourhood of Hanover Square," seemed only too excruciatingly connected with the neighbourhood of Great St. Helens; and he accordingly turned a blind eye to the appeals of the newspapers.

Runaway school-boys, as novelwise represented, more especially if genteel youths with blue eyes and fair hair, are sure to fall

in, on the Queen's highway, with a company of strolling-players; though thanks to the great unpaid and great unpaying—the sage magistracy, and most undramatic public of Great Britain,—strolling-players are nearly as rare in the land as crocodiles or mandrakes. W. M. might have travelled from Dan to Beersheba, or from Truro to John o'Groat's House, without risk of encountering anything of a theatrical nature more erratic than a London Star flying per railroad to fulfil his engagements at Liverpool or New York; or an ex-cabinet minister on his road to speechify his constituents as a safety-valve for the over-pressure of his spleen.

Nay, though the green woods were just then particularly green, seeing that it was

The leafy month of June,
When birds and babbling brooks are most in tune,

he had not the good fortune to chance upon so much as a gypsy's camp, to sup with some kerchiefed beauty of raven-hair and walnut-juice complexion, on broiled hedgehog, under

the green-wood tree, and with the terror of the constable before his eyes.

On the high-road, he met with nothing but broad-wheeled waggons; in the woods and fields, but plough-boys—soil-harrowing, not soul-harrowing companionship for a hero.

Meanwhile, had the conscience-stricken Mrs. Manvers suspected to what city of refuge her son had betaken himself, her maternal inquietudes would have subsided at once. Following the tender instincts of his heart, young Willoughby had remembered him of

Woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please ;

and, on finding that “grief and danger were wringing his brow,” in the form of impending clerkhood, fled to the bosom of a ministering angel, who had often smoothed it with brush and comb in those happy days of infancy before a sonnet had emanated, Minerva-like, therefrom, to witch the world with its noble poesy. Having secured an outside place on the Biggleswade coach, he

invited himself to spend a few weeks in Bedfordshire with his old nurse.

The Mrs. Digges in question, however, though prosaic enough in herself, was not altogether undeserving the recollection of a genteel rhymester in his seventeenth year, with an eye of tender blue, and locks of Daphne's hue; the son upon whose comfortable farm her old age had pensioned itself, being the widowed father of a Miranda,—nay, of two Mirandas,—endowing his turnip-fields and hay-stacks with all the enchantments of Prospero's island.

W. M., the favourite nursling of the venerable Mrs. Digges, had often been invited to “run down” in his Midsummer holidays, and take a peep at the farm which dispatched such fat geese at Michaelmas, and such white turkeys at Christmas, to the respected lady and gentleman in the vicinity of Hanover Square. Unaware, however, that there was anything to “run down” there but himself, he had forborne; and his present visit was, accordingly, accepted as the performance of former promises, without exciting the slightest suspicion on the part of his hosts.

The old lady still called him "Willy,—her darling Willy;" the young ladies, "Master Manvers;" and though the farmer sometimes thought it odd that the young gentleman and his Pa and Ma held so little communication by letter, he was too busy with his hay to trouble himself much about the matter.

What worlds of poetry might have been conjured out of a situation like that of my hero! and what tomes of prose certain living novelties would belabour it withal! Black-birds, thrushes, and hawthorn-bushes!—what a situation! Cherubino among the hay-fields of the county of Beds; Don Juan, junior, ruralizing in June, with two fair spirits for his ministers, in the form of Jane and Mary Digges! Had not their father presumed to call them Jenny and Polly, as many sonnets had been indited in their honour as were dedicated by Petrarch to his Laura.

On the other hand, what tomes of sonnets whispered, and stanzas looked, signalized the sunsets and sunrisings, the noons and twilights of Long-croft farm! A heroine at a

time, suffices a rational man, — *two* were scarcely enough for a rhyming boy! The facilities created by this double passion were inestimable. For Jane was a dark beauty, and Mary as blue and flaxen as Titian could have desired; and all the epithets which the affluence of the English language supplies were strictly and honourably divisible between the sisters.

Jenny was a laughing beauty, — Polly inclined to the sentimental; and it was easy to love them both, in their several styles, on the alternate days of the week, dividing the Sundays between the two. From the blessed Monday morning, when he rushed forth at daybreak into the hay-field to romp with the dark-haired Jane, to the exquisite Saturday night, when he wandered home through the twilight and green lanes with Mary, her straw-bonnet entwined with dog-roses and honey-suckles, and her waist entwined with his arm, the life of the youthful poet was an eclogue!

In hay-time a farmer's mind is in the clouds; and as the old nurse was passing old, and of a capacity such as usually attends

a life spent in successive nurseries, it occurred to nobody at Longcroft that Master Manvers was somewhat overstaying his holidays; or that the dairy-duties of Miss Jane, and laundry-duties of Miss Mary, were less diligently performed than aforetime. Their grandmother praised them as dutiful girls, for giving up so much of their time to her darling little Willy; while the father continually exhorted them to take care that the young squire was properly looked to. How he was looked *at*, did not enter into the calculations of the head of the family; and the fugitive from Great St. Helens was accordingly at liberty to wander strawberry-picking in the woods, or star-gazing in the meadows, singly, doubly, or trebly. There was safety in numbers, there was joy in duality. He was in love with both sisters, or rather, he knew not with *which*; and both were decidedly in love with *him*.

While poor Mrs. Manvers was lavishing her half-guineas in daily advertisements, and the infuriated Mr. Manvers losing his temper in daily ebullitions, their beloved Willoughby was teaching the young ideas of

the Misses Digges how to shoot at the rate of fifteen sonnets per diem.

Matters were brought to a conclusion by a two-fold catastrophe. Jane Digges received in form, not a *proposal*, but a *refusal* of marriage!

“Were honour to be driven from the earth,” says one of the high-sounding writers, “her refuge should be the breast of Kings.” On the present occasion she installed herself in that of a Bedfordshire clown. A certain John Tomkins, who had roasted nuts with the merry Jane the preceding Michaelmas, taken the chaste salute from her lips under the miseltie the preceding Christmas, and received her father’s permission to make his addresses agreeable to her on Sundays, between morning-service and even-song, not only signified his determination to have no further concern with a damsel so addicted to early hay-making, but the following Sabbath was asked in church with a tanner’s daughter of Biggleswade!

Every member of the house, or farm, of Digges, was indignant. The matter was considered and re-considered in family coun-

cil ; and as the hay was now fairly in, and Farmer Digges at leisure for paternal vigilance, it occurred to him that the eyes of tender blue of Master Manvers were rather *too* blue, and the sonnets a *great* deal too blue for a longer visit to Longcroft. The old lady was required to intimate to her nursling that his company was probably wanted in the neighbourhood of Hanover Square.

Before, however, there had been time for the critical communication, came a letter, per post, to the doating nurse of "darling Willy," from the disconsolate Mrs. Manvers, relating the disappearance of her pet, containing plaintive allusions to bombazine and broad hems.

Glad waxed the heart of the venerable nurse. Like Juliet's, she chuckled for joy. It was something to be spared the pain of conveying an ungracious message to her charge ; and much more to enjoy the satisfaction of conveying a consolatory one to her lady. Dreading lest if the truant bird were compelled to take wing, he might only fly the further from his parent nest, she

enjoined her son to be patient, while she despatched an answer to the Manvers' family, announcing that W. M. had been comfortably housed for some weeks past under the hospitable roof of Longcroft; and that, so far from having broken his neck, as surmised by his desponding mamma, he had broken nothing but bounds, and the hearts of her two grand-daughters.

By return of coach, Thomas Manvers, Esq., came, saw, and conquered his inclination to give a tremendous threshing to his undutiful offspring. After being closeted some time with Farmer Digges, the inclination became redoubled—nay, retrebled. A cane is, however, an unsafe substitute for a fatted calf, to welcome home a prodigal son. Manvers, senior, was forced to accept Manvers, junior, as he found him, and be thankful that he found him at all. The only apology he could find to make to the farmer was—"It is all his mother's fault, sir! What put it into her head to give the boy that confounded romantic name of Willoughby!"

Such was the event which placed my

handsome cousin in the army; and, in the sequel, the pensive Mary in the chorus of a minor theatre, and the sprightly Jenny in that doleful army of martyrs, the company of old maids and ladies' maids. The discovery which made Willoughby an ensign, made *them* miserable for life.

Now Willoughby Manvers was only seventeen years and four days old when gazetted; yet, such is the tendency to perjury in masculine hearts when connected with eyes of tender blue, that he who but a month before—a little month—ere yet those shoes were old which he now exchanged for Wellington's, had sworn to Mary, and sworn to Jane, together and severally, that the dearest ambition of his life was never more to lose sight of Longcroft, its pinfold and rickyard, could scarcely restrain his joy at sight of his own person regimentalized in his admiring mother's swing-glass; or subdue his hilarity, on taking his seat in the mail on his way to the pleasing town of Burr, on the inviting outskirts of the Bog of Allen, accompanied by a new shaving-case, to which nothing but a beard was wanting, and a vast portman-

teau, painted in a text that almost rivalled his own in legibility, "Ensign Willoughby Manvers, 3d Foot."

His soul swelled within his bosom, like that of Columbus when embarking for his mighty enterprise. The moon was bright in the autumnal heavens; yet the young rogue gazed upon its brightness without any further thought of the lovely Mary or Jane, to whom he had sworn eternal moonshine, than if they had been no dearer to him than a couple of their father's Christmas turkeys!—

And now,

The world was all before him where to choose
His place of rest, and Providence his guide ;

that is, the Bog of Allen was before him, and the adjutant of his regiment, his guide. But Willoughby chose to consider the matter Miltonianly, and a great comfort to him it was. It was not, however, his only comfort. He was the prettiest fellow in the garrison. The market-place of Burr soon prated of his whereabouts; and before the sallows put forth their catkins the following spring, there was a sempstress in a consump-

tion, and the barmaid of the King's Arms out of a situation. But it was no fault of *his*!—"It was his mother's fault for giving him that confounded romantic name of Wil-loughby!"

Not that I mean to attribute solely to the power of a name either the pulmonary afflictions of the one, or the backslidings of the other. But certain it is, that when my young cousin was invited to dinner at Gammerton House, the ancient seat of Sir Phineas O'Gammerton, on the borders of the bog, there were two Captain Smiths in the regiment, and three Lieutenant Thompsons and Johnsons, with prior claims to the hospitality of the Milesian baronet. Had Manvers been plain Will—in short, as when dishonoured at his preparatory school—never had he been presented to the notice of Miss Honoria O'Gammerton, only daughter, though not sole heiress, of Sir Phineas.

At first, he attached little importance to the presentation. The baronet's wine was too sour, and his venison too sweet, to recommend him as a dinner-host, even to the junior ensign of a marching regiment; and

as the daughter was of mature years and as sour as the claret, Willoughby felt little ambitious that she should look sweet upon him. Rumour had already apprized him that the elderly young lady was a saint; and he was aware that Catholic bigotry having laid the foundation for Protestant bigotry in the sister island, the saintship of a country neighbourhood in Ireland is bitter as worm-wood: the ascendancy of priestcraft only changing its form of prayer in establishing the new tyranny. Sir Phineas was supposed to be too deeply immersed in his bad claret, to be accessible to the baptism of the new light; but his daughter was a convert for both,—the most evangelic of the daughters of Eve!

Towards such a lady, even had she been fair with the fairness of beautiful eighteen, my sinful cousin Willoughby would scarcely have ventured to lift his eyes. But, having years of discretion and a face which was anything but that of a Hebe for her safeguard, he contented himself with laughing at the Curragh anecdotes of the ancient baronet, and the sanctimonious face where-

with they were listened to by the starched nephew of Sir Phineas, Mr. Cornelius O'Gammerton.

Thenceforward Willoughby was frequently invited to Gammerton House. In spite of the sour claret and boozy old gentleman, he persisted in accepting ; for the Gammerton estates afforded the best shooting in the neighbourhood, and his quarters little inducement to abstain. There was, moreover, some fun in witnessing the contortions of countenance with which the solemn nephew gave ear to the campaigning stories of his militia days, extracted by much claret and military companionship from the red-nosed proprietor of Gammerton House.

By degrees, these grimaces grew more and more convulsive. Mr. Cornelius O'Gammerton appeared to be bewitched, or rather bewitched, whenever the young gentleman of Belial graced the table of the uncle whom he purposed to make a father-in-law, if the result of the West Indian climate (to which the decree of the Horse Guards had sentenced the heavy dragoon regiment in which the only son of the Baronet, Captain O'Gam-

merton, was doing his duty to his king and country), should be satisfactory. For long as he had put his trust in black mutinies and yellow fever to make Honoria an heiress, and himself the happiest of men, he foresaw an enemy to his prospects in the blue eyes of winsome Will, such as now almost induced him to pray for the immortality of the heavy dragoon.

Ovid has signalised the metamorphoses produced by the influence of the blind god in the days of Heathenesse, in verses which we rashly inflict on the memory of our sons from the moment their classical ideas take out their shooting-licence. But if modern prose would only take the trouble to describe the metamorphoses daily effected under our eyes, by the same legerdmain of Cupid, the circulating libraries would be all the wiser.

His Majesty's 3d Foot had not been six weeks quartered at Burr, before the all but vedovial cap of Miss Honoria gave place to a French mob, under which a few straggling curls were permitted to make their appearance; and at the close of a few months, the

fervour of a fine summer afforded a pretext for throwing it off altogether, and giving to view richer braids and curls far more glossy than had ever been suspected as appurtenant to the head of the spinster of thirty-one !

Nevertheless, the ensign looked on as disregardingly as on the pigtail of his brigademajor : nay, had it pleased Miss O'Gamerton to figure at the head of her father's table all shaven and shorn, like the priest who had pronounced his *benedicite* there in the time of her grandfather, it is more than doubtful whether he would have noticed the change.

Such being the case, it will scarcely be wondered at that she was left to stroll alone by moonlight through the shrubberies, after having strictly interdicted the attendance of her cousin in presence of her father's reprobate guest ; and though careful to intimate the exact hour of her daily visits to the town of Burr, and provoke the restive ponies of her phaeton into a fit of obstinacy opposite the barrack-gates, the two Captain Smiths and three or four Lieutenant Thompsons and Johnsons were sure to rush forth to her assistance, while Willoughby, in his

flowered dressing-gown, stirred not a step from his arm-chair and the last new novel!

By degrees, it was whispered with horror in the "serious" circles of the neighbourhood, that certain handboxes had been dropped at the lodge-gates of Gammerton House, by the Dublin coaches, bearing the superscription of the hapless spinster, whose secession from the austerities of her people was noted with the same pious horror as of yore the extinction of the sacred fire in the hands of the vestal! It was pronounced to be all over with Miss Honoria, from the time she was seen to drive barefaced through the streets of Burr in a pink bonnet.

Nevertheless, the grave Cornelius, panic-struck as he was, abstained not from the board of his uncle. Peradventure he had still hope of reclaiming the castaway; for the warm summer which excused the surrender at indiscretion of Miss O'Gammerton's heavy cap and heavier straw bonnet, had unquestionably been a parlous hot one in Barbadoes. He sat shuddering on, therefore, at Sir Phineas's dinner-table, uplifting his eyes to

Heaven,—and putting his trust in Providence and the yellow fever.

Nevertheless, matters at Gammerton House grew more and more alarming ; and when the assizes came on, and the robes and caps of judges and chaperons were astir for judgment-seat and ball-room, and Miss Honoria signified her intention of figuring for the first time in her life in the gay and festive scene, her better angel, in the shape of her cousin Cornelius, spread his wings, and vanished from the desecrated Paradise which had witnessed the fall of his angel !

Her angel, meanwhile, her Willoughby, might have taken flight also, for any advantage that she obtained by his remaining ! Thirty-one, though far from a repulsive period in matronly life, is an epoch of spinster-hood with which ensigns of the name of Willoughby have little sympathy. Manvers turned an ungrateful eye upon the tough lamb which, for his sake, had wandered from the fold ; and even when, in the course of time, letters, indited in a handwriting not quite so clerkly as his own, reached him by the hands of the gossoon officiating as letter-

carrier to Gammerton Park, on finding them extend some pages beyond the limits of an invitation to dinner, he committed them to the flames, savagely regardless of those ignited by his eyes of tender blue.

The result of all this is painful to contemplate ; yet, unless fairly placed before the world, where would be the moral of the anecdote ? Ere yet the shrubberies of Gammerton were thoroughly denuded of their verdure, his Majesty's 3rd received its route for Cork, to embark for the Peninsula ; and before they were green again—there was no longer an Honoria O'Gammerton on the face of the earth !

The ensign having marched off as Cornelius had marched before him,—never to return,—the desponding spinster also made an end of herself. For though neither cousin nor Willoughby re-appeared, the robust brother, who had survived the prayers and wishes of his relatives, shortly afterwards intimated his safe arrival in his native country, and that he came accompanied by a wife and child, giving promise of thriving heirship to the House of O'Gammerton !

The defalcation of Cornelius being thus explained, the improbability that his place as suitor should ever be filled up became so cruelly apparent, that the broken-hearted middle-aged young lady resigned herself to despair, and committed suicide by a marriage with the apothecary.

My cousin, meanwhile, was fighting at Corunna, and as bravely as became one of the noblest, though most disastrous, actions illustrating the records of British valour. I suppose he must be accounted among the fortunate heroes of that memorable day; inasmuch as, instead of finding his rest after it in a bed six feet by one and a half, "with his martial cloak around him," he took it in a tolerable bed, after the extraction of a couple of balls, with a pair of the blackest eyes watching over him that ever glanced beneath the basquina of an Iberian beauty. But that her teeth were nearly as black as her eyes, even the anguish of his wounds would scarcely have secured poor Willoughby from instantaneous combustion.

On this occasion, by the way, his crabbed governor could have found no pretext for

charging upon his Willoughbyhood the tenderness with which he soon came to be cherished by the lovely Paquita ; for neither she nor her husband, during the long course of his sickness, ever addressed him otherwise than as "Senor Inglese." The vigils that watched over his pillow,—the flowers that were laid upon it,—the enamoured songs which, in process of time, enlivened his convalescence,—the gentle words and gentler sighs that arose when it became clear that the wounded lieutenant was once more an available soldier, were dedicated to a hero altogether anonymous in the heart of the ill-fated Paquita.

It was the first time that eyes of tender blue or locks of Daphne's hue had startled the eyes of the simple-hearted woman ; and to find them pillowed thus familiarly under her roof, was as though some wandering angel had sought hospitality there, as angels used in the olden time, when police and passports were not. There could scarcely be a better mode of propitiating her heavenly guest than by a daily tribute of orange-blossoms and modinhas ; for, according to the

religion of *her* church, flowers and music constitute the most fitting offering for the holiest of altars. And if such love-gifts awoke thoughts far from angelic in her suffering charge, it was no fault of the pious Paquita.

There was a vine that enlaced its foliage round the windows of the chamber into which the English officer had been removed from the field; a green vine overshadowing the little room far more efficiently than even the most jealous of *jalousies*. Not even the sun could peep in; and close under the lattice used Paquita to sit, with her knitting in her hands, while the invalid, on pretence of slumber, lay watching the fine oval of her face enframed between two raven tresses, assimilating only too harmoniously with her olive-coloured complexion.

She was quite satisfied to sit there, silent and, as she supposed, unnoticed; — calmly conscious of her happiness in being permitted to minister to the recovery of the fair youth, who, on entering her dwelling, had been pronounced in a hopeless condition; and who, instead of dying in a foreign country,

far from mother, sister, friend, had been tended by her vigilant care, even to convalescence!

Eyes of tender blue are workers of strange miracles!—My cousin Willoughby's, which had converted at Gammerten House a saint into a sinner, were now doing their best towards converting a sinner into a saint. For, alas! the early days of that quiet nurse had enjoyed a far from immaculate reputation; and even those who adduced in extenuation the brutality of a savage husband, admitted that Paquita had somewhat abused her privilege as a victim. Now, however, instead of pursuing her former gadabout habits, the poor creature never quitted the house, except for a daily mass at the nearest church; to reach which, she had to traverse the market yielding the flowers with which she adorned the chamber of the invalid.

So assiduous, so unwearying, was her charity towards the sufferer, that she would not allow the smallest service to be performed for him by the sole servant of her humble household. It was *she* who smoothed his pillow, prepared his medicaments, broke

open the lemon or pomegranate that was to freshen his potions; and opened or closed the lattice, as the day deepened into the freshness of evening or coolness of night. She was his friend—his servant—his slave; for, sooth to say, the friendship of loving two-and-twenty for eyes of tender blue, is sadly apt to degenerate into servitude!—

It may be that the *real* servant of the household was jealous of these encroachments upon her privilege of office; for when, some days after the exchange had been effected which restored Lieutenant Manvers to his regiment, and Fernan, the ferocious spouse of Paquita, to the enjoyment of his vine-shaded chamber, Paquita—the predestined Paquita—was found one morning by the bedside weltering in her blood!

The pretext of robbery, accompanied by assassination, obtained little faith; and, but for the agitation of war-time, the brutal husband and treacherous domestic would probably have had to submit to judicial interrogation, instead of sharing between them the liberal donation which was shortly afterwards forwarded by Willoughby Manvers

from head-quarters, to the kindest and best of nurses,—now cold in the grave!

Fortunately for the peace of mind of the young Dear-Slayer, tidings of this cruel catastrophe were not fated to reach his ear. While Willoughby's presents were on their road to Corunna, Willoughby's self was on his voyage home, on sick-leave; and when spending his Christmas by the domestic fire-side in the neighbourhood of Hanover Square, he delighted to lose sight of the murky skies of London, in reminiscences of the ethereal atmosphere of the Peninsula, and the tenderness of his nurse. The thick waists and ankles of his fair countrywomen,—their florid complexions and unmeaning physiognomies,—served only to impart a brighter grace to his recollections of the sparkling eyes and expressive countenance, the buoyant gait and delicate conformation of the dear, thoughtful Paquita, who had redeemed him from the bed of death.

Mrs. Manvers was never weary of the recital of the dangers her Willoughby had passed; and dearer than the tale of battle-field or siege, danger, or destruction, was that of the faithful woman who had watched

over him with a sister's love, without other fee or reward than the grateful gaze of his eyes of tender blue.

Her maternal sensibilities were, in fact, peculiarly devoted to the son whom she had christened into heroism. Thomas, her eldest hope, was in the Law; John, the second, in the Church; and by neither one nor the other was she ever called upon for more than the lukewarm sympathies elicited by a catarrh or a bilious headache. Thomas was too assiduous in his profession to have leisure for love,—John too respectable in *his* to have leisure for mischief; and her motherly love might have “rotted itself at ease on Lethé's wharf,” but for the Willoughby who, though only in his twentieth year, could already prate as familiarly of war and women “as maids of fifteen do of puppy-dogs.” She would never have heard of the gallant Moore save in the Gazette, or of a heroine such as Paquita, save in the pages of Cervantes or Le Sage, but for the first campaign of his Majesty's 3rd foot!—

Now, though orange-blossoms and guitars,—clustering vines and festoons of Spanish jessamine,—raven tresses, and symmetrical

ankles, may have little danger for the ear of a stout motherly woman of eight-and-forty, it is more questionable whether such topics be equally safe for a pretty cousin of seventeen, such as the Agnes Falkingham who, just released from school, was spending her season of emancipation with the family of her aunt.

Considering that the name of Uncle Manvers was plain Thomas, and that his sense was generally considered as plain as his name and person, it was somewhat surprising that he should have admitted such a companion to share the sick-leave of Willoughby. But Miss Falkingham had a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds; and people who have elder sons in the Law and Church, those blackest and most matrimonific of professions, are often anxious to secure safe and early matches for their progeny. Agnes would have suited her uncle exceedingly well as daughter-in-law,—provided the eyes of Tom and Jack, which were neither blue nor tender, produced a sufficient impression on the young lady, to determine her to a nearer connexion with the family; and as the governor took far less heed of his fair-

visaged Scapegrace than of his more deserving offspring, he incautiously overlooked the danger which might arise to his project, from the interest created by his young Othello in the eyes of the new Desdemona.

For if Willoughby were never weary of talking of Paquita to his cousin Agnes, his cousin Agnes was never weary of hearing about Paquita! All she had said, and done, and looked,—though the things she had looked were unutterable, and many of the things she had done unmentionable,—became themes for daily discussion. Agnes had a vain consciousness that something was amiss in the business; but this only enhanced the charm of the mystery to the heart of a romantic school-girl.

She was an amazingly pretty creature, Agnes Falkingham; bearing just the sort of resemblance to her cousin Willoughby which is supposed to beget conjugal tendencies even between strangers. Her eyes were as blue as his, her hair as fair and glossy; and after gazing unintermittingly for weeks upon eyes and tresses as black as jet, it is a relief like that of daybreak after a long winter's

night, to transfer one's gaze to one of those Saxon faces which are apparently composed of sunbeams and rosebuds.

After ten days' observation, Willoughby proceeded so far, one day at dessert, as to take in one hand a pallid winter-orange, and in the other a cherry-cheeked apple, and whisper to himself a comparison between the complexion of English beauty and Portuguese.

It was cruel,—it was ungrateful;—but how was he to surmise in how terrible a sort poor Paquita had expiated the last whisper he had hazarded on that invidious subject!—

Meanwhile, John was at his living and Thomas at his chambers; and though the latter dined in the bosom of his family on Sundays and other festivals, he had always too much to say on business to his father, to have much to say on pleasure to his cousin.

Agnes was thankful for his neglect. What could a man whose name was Thomas, and who resided in Pump Court, have to unfold, worthy comparison with the revelations of her Willoughby,—whose wounds, both from the musket-balls and eye-balls of the Peninsula, were still smarting!—Miss Falkingham felt that it was unnecessary to subscribe to

a circulating-library, so long as she resided under the same roof with such a cousin.

Every afternoon, in that delicious interval of social owl-light which succeeds the drawing of curtains, and precedes the arrival of candles, two arm-chairs were drawn closer towards the fire in Mrs. Manvers's drawing-room, and not very far from each other; and the abstinence from stirring the coals into a tell-tale blaze was, perhaps, a delicate attention on the part of Agnes towards her soldier-cousin, (who could scarcely talk of Paquita without tears,) or a delicate attention of the soldier-cousin towards Agnes (who could never listen without blushing).

At that critical hour, the governor was seldom returned from the city, and the governor's lady apt to be closeted with her waiting-woman, preparatory to the business of the toilet; so that the young couple were left to the perils and dangers of "their own hearts' most sweet society."—There was not *much*, perhaps, for the gentle youth whose soul was still enwrapt in an atmosphere of guitars and orange-blossoms. But as to Agnes,

The precipice she stood on was immense!

She had begun to see visions and dream dreams of the Peninsula. The little vine-trellised chamber in the dwelling of Fernan the assassin, lived a new life in her imagination; only that, in this creation of girlish fancy, the nurse attendant on the pillow of her cousin, so far from being of a dusky complexion, was bright-faced as one of the transparent-tinted countesses of Lely or Sir Joshua, and in place of raven tresses, the ringlets of the tender-hearted woman were as unbleached flax.

Unhappy Agnes!—Already she was so diligent a scholar of Sola, that she and her guitar had all but strummed her sober uncle into a nervous fever; while Aunt Manvers, assuring her that a chocolate diet was fatal to the complexion, could scarcely refrain from hinting, that whenever she became Mrs. John Manvers and a bride, she would be fain to return to a humdrum breakfast of tea and toast.

After all, the tender-hearted girl was only playing Paquita to the best of her capacity; and though, in the sequel, tempted to abbreviate her petticoats to a length only tolerable in the land of castanets and slender ankles,

and odious in the sight of the neighbourhood of Hanover Square, as she was *not* an opera-dancer, no Bishop or *Intendant des menus plaisirs* was privileged to interfere.

But a crisis was approaching. Though the young lawyer was too busy with his suits to take heed of his suit, the young parson became only too painfully reminded by the multiplicity of weddings and christenings he was called upon to solemnize, that *he* was making little progress towards that holy estate of matrimony, essential to the bliss of his parsonic life and the excellence of his cowslip-wine;—the only olive-branches and fruitful vine with which cousin Agnes and her fifteen thousand pounds seemed likely to be connected in the Manvers family, being those adorning the Peninsular romance of the dangerous Willoughby.

Whenever he hurried up to town, on pretence of a visit to Hatchard's, but in reality to burst unannounced into the drawing-room in George Street, when the fire was at its lowest, and the two arm-chairs at their closest, *there* was he sure to find them!—whispering to each other as low and tenderly, as if there had been twenty people in the room, instead

of only a blind spaniel on the hearth-rug, and a canary-bird with its head under its wing !—

Rendered desperate by these discoveries, one day, when Willoughby had hurried from his father's port-wine to his mother's tea-table, leaving the governor and the young rector to talk over their tithes and consols together, John Manvers took occasion to signify to his parent that, within a mile from his parsonage resided a certain half-pay captain, having seven daughters, extremely musical, and not particularly ill-looking; whereupon Thomas Manvers, senior, trembling for the prospects of his son, hastened to inquire whether the family in question contained a prettier girl than his charming cousin Agnes ?

If she be not fair to me,
What care I how fair she be ?

was a very natural reply on the part of the slighted parson ; and when further explanations convinced the indignant parent that Miss Falkingham was only *fair* to the only one of his sons in whom it was *unfair* to pretend to her smiles, he bad his injured John take patience and another glass of wine ; and the following day, obtained at the Horse Guards a signification to Lieutenant Man-

vers, of the 3rd, that his leave could not be extended, and that he must forthwith join the depot at Portsmouth.

It happened that on the Saturday morning which brought the official HMS., sealed with his Majesty's arms, to the astonished lieutenant, Agnes had proceeded to the residence of her guardian at Hammersmith, for a visit of a few days; in the course of which, she hoped to propitiate the old gentleman in favour of adopting heroes with eyes of tender blue, and an odour of Peninsular cigaritos lingering in their garments. And lo! when, on the Tuesday following, she returned, bringing with her a handsomely-bound copy of Mrs. Chapone's works, and an exceedingly heavy heart, — no Willoughby was to be seen.

In reply to her agitated inquiries, one of his younger sisters ingenuously informed her that "brother Will was gone off by the Rocket!" — whereupon Miss Falkingham went off into a fit of hysterics! —

Her first ejaculation, on returning to the use of her senses, was in the words of Professor Milman's Bianca,

' Not come to me, — not write to me, — not send to me !'

when Hammersmith coaches depart every twenty minutes from the White Bear, Piccadilly, and the twopenny post would have summoned me hither in time at least for an eternal farewell!"

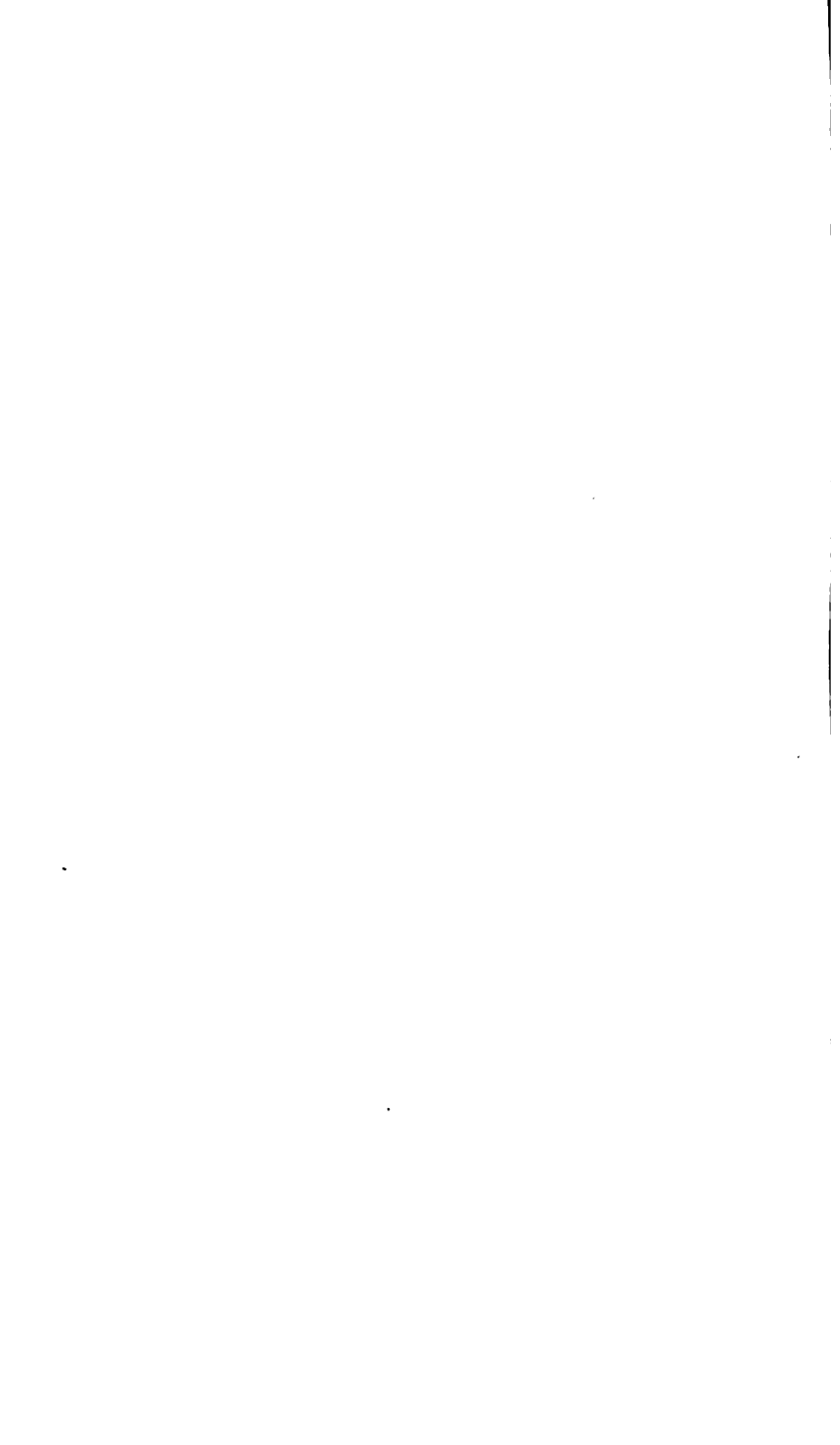
The words "eternal" and "farewell" have a golden sound in the ears of sensitive seventeen!—Yet, golden as they were, the iron had entered into the soul of Agnes!—She saw that all was over for her in this most common-place of worlds.—No more modinhas,—no more Camoens.—With the prospect of a mitre before her eyes, she would never have become the wife of her parson-cousin,—nor, with the expectancy of the Woolsack, of the sober Templar!—Rather, a thousand times, the fifth, though far from the last victim of Willoughby, the Lady Killer.

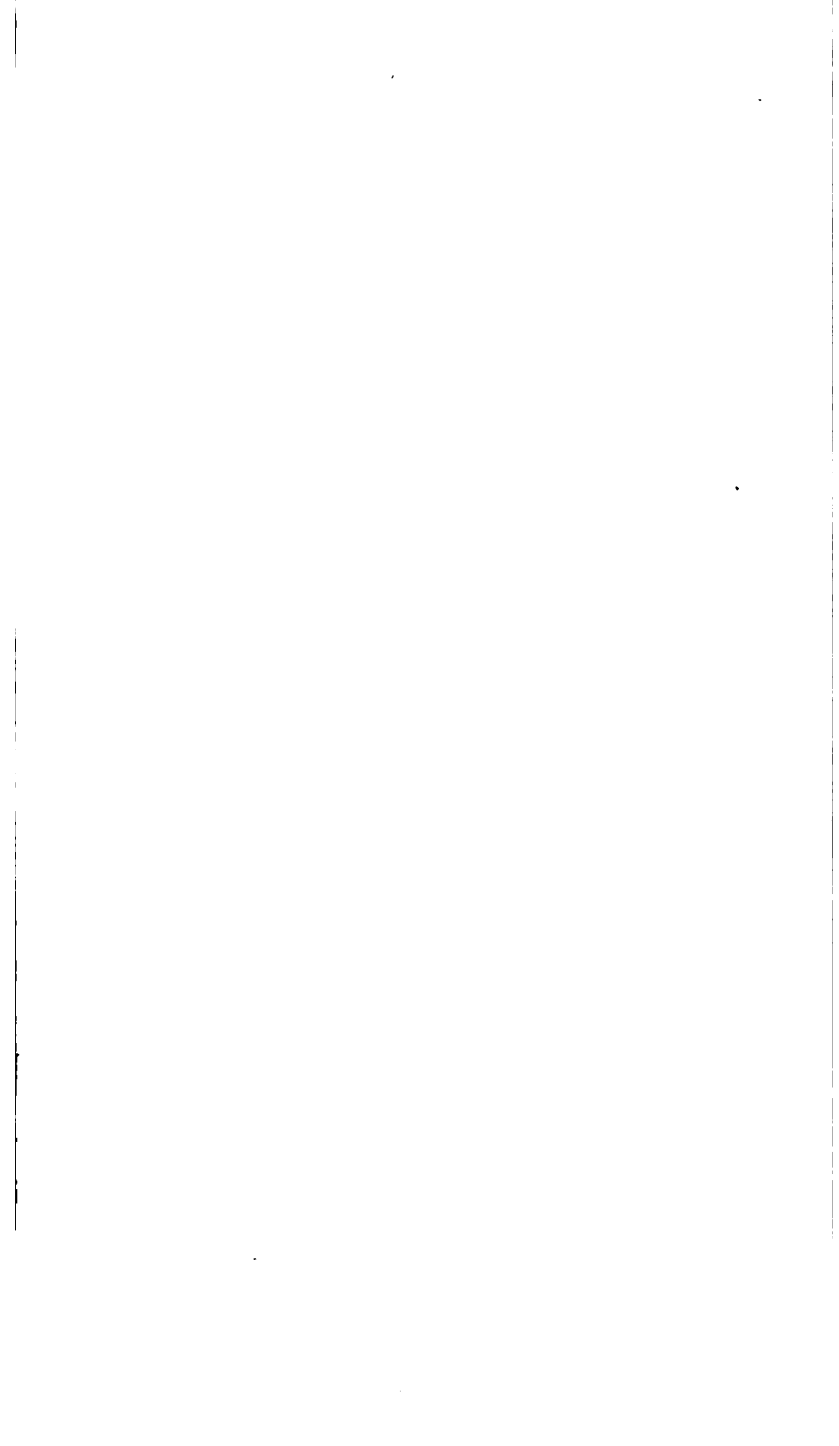
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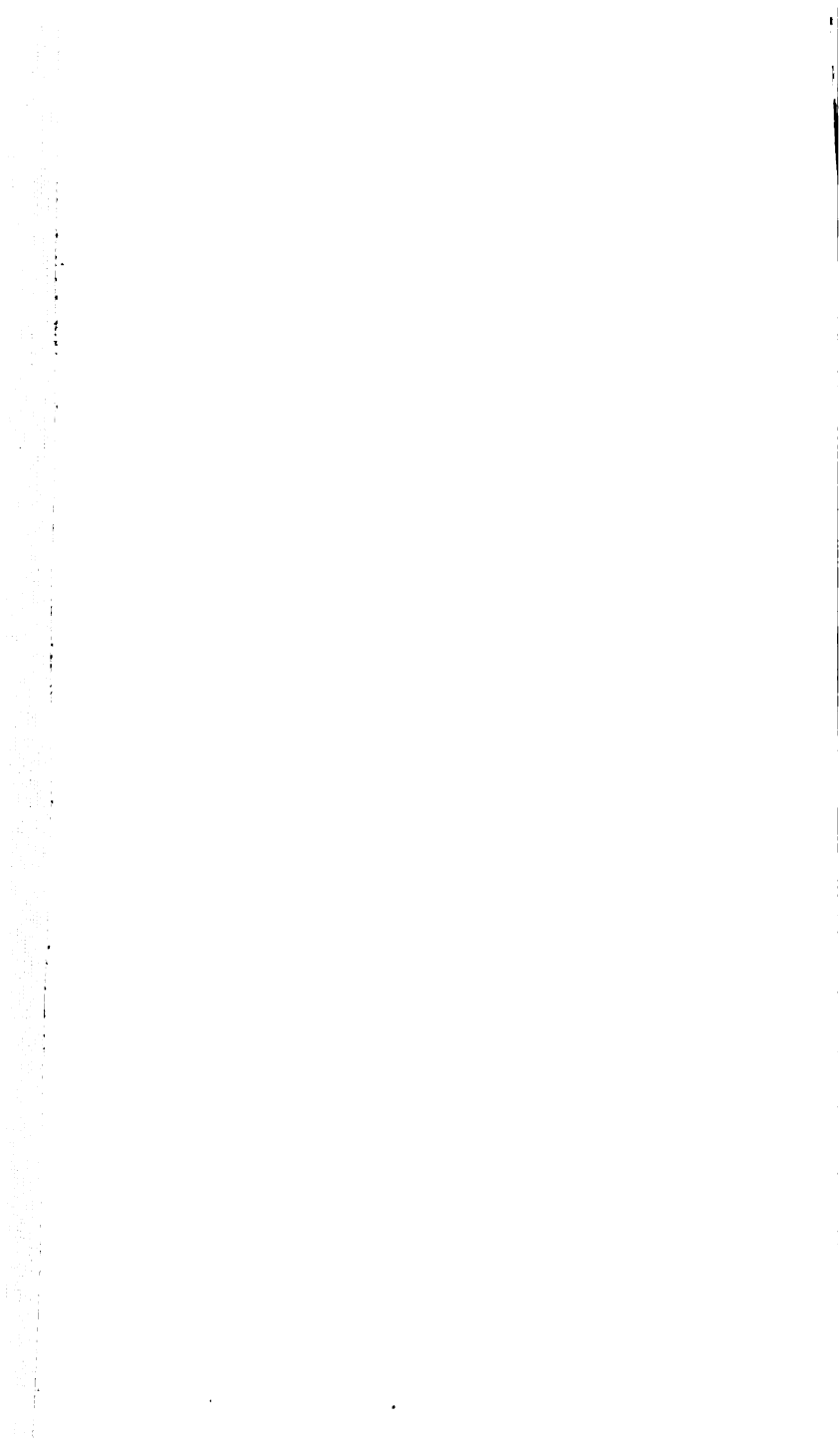
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